

Bass BRITAIN'S BEST SELLING
PREMIUM HAND PULLED ALE SINCE 1777.

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Take that! Major brushes aside old discords

News that the pop group Take That is to split has apparently prompted its distraught fan club to phone Downing Street. They need advice on how to paper over cracks and to reconcile belligerents. If anyone can hold a divided group together, they reason, it is John Major.

They are wise. The Prime Minister's first instinct in the Take That crisis will be to buy time to postpone the decision until 1997. Then he will promise a White Paper on the issues and hint at a possible referendum, but in ambiguous terms. If pressed, he will set up an inquiry. He will see each member of Take That for a personal chat, one to one, authorising officials to talk separately to Mark, Jason, Gary and Howard: talks about talks. There may be hints (not from the PM himself, of course) about honours.

This column reckons Major's chance of success quite highly. Frankly, a man who has succeeded in cobbling together a Government out of some 325 treacherous, vain, greedy, scheming rats, skivers, oddballs, dimwits, deadbeats, wide-boys, fainthearts and raving lunatics — and kept the show on the road for

MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

Labour Leader remained tight-lipped. Earlier (to Opposition embarrassment) the junior health minister John Birt had responded to a question from Maria Fyfe (Lab, Glasgow Maryhill): "May I welcome the hon and Scottish lady to English Health Questions?" A Scottish parliament, of course, would take responsibility for health north of the border, but Mrs Fyfe could

continue to speak and vote on the English National Health Service. The Opposition can find no answer to the dilemma, as there isn't one. Among new-Labour MPs, the puzzle has become rather like those questions that grown-ups don't ask the vicar because they are so plunkingly basic. It is left to children to enquire: "In Heaven, will Mum be married to Daddy or to my first Daddy, who died?" Unlike with Mum and Dad, however, it is not open to Mr Blair to reply "Shut up and eat your Frosties", so he just says nothing. But how will he

solve the problem? A Scottish Labour MP suggested yesterday what could well be the answer. Sam Galbraith (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) introduced a Bill for the establishment of national parks in Scotland. Mr Galbraith is on to a good idea but he is too timid. Why not make the whole of Scotland a national park? The country could be "themed" so there would even be a place for the Gorbals and other dismal, granite-hewn urban prospects. As "the Caledonian National Park", the region would no longer need Mr Blair but a park board on which

Scotland's senior former MPs could sit while the others donned kilts and became rangers. As P.O. Wodehouse almost wrote, it is possible to distinguish between a ray of sunshine and a Scots MP with a grievance. But in a theme park the aggrieved tone and surly countenance would be welcomed by tourists as adding to the authenticity of the experience. And the Commons would be rescued from the synchronised gripe they call "Scottish Questions".

Broken hearts, page 5
Jane Gordon, page 15

Windfall of £10bn for cereal farmers

Europe's beef and cereal farmers have been "overcompensated" by taxpayers to a total of £10 billion, over the past three years, the Ministry of Agriculture said yesterday. (Michael Hornsby writes.)

Douglas Hogg, the Minister of Agriculture, said the European Union should use the opportunity offered by farming's current prosperity to cut subsidies.

Sir David Naish, the president of the National Farmers' Union, said: "Mr Hogg has ignored the role played by the depreciation of the pound in British farmers' higher returns."

Women win case

Seventeen women health workers who missed out on a pay rise because they were on maternity leave won their claim of discrimination in the European Court of Justice. The court in Luxembourg ruled that Joan Gillespie and 16 other unnamed women, mostly nurses, clearly qualified for the increase. However, it dismissed their claim that women on maternity leave should receive full pay.

Howe on judges

Lord Howe of Aberavon is expected to warn tonight in BBC Radio 4's *Times Past*, *Times Future* of a loss of respect between politicians and judges which is fuelling clashes between them. His concern about the deteriorating relationship between the government and judges is echoed by Judge Stephen Tumm, who says relations have got worse since Michael Howard became Home Secretary.

Tag' man back

The criminal who, last year, was the first to be electronically tagged was back in court yesterday to plead guilty to shoplifting at two supermarkets — Clive Barratt, 30, of King's Lynn, Norfolk, was given a year's probation after telling the magistrates at Swaffham that he had committed the offences because he had no money to feed his three children, the result of problems with benefits payments.

Bypass evictions

Newbury bypass protesters failed to block moves to evict them from their camps, tunnels and tree-top homes. Sir John Wood, sitting as a High Court judge, ruled that the Department of Transport had been lawfully granted possession of land at Snelmore Common occupied by campaigners. The protesters had admitted that they were trespassers on the 8½-mile bypass route.

EU beef warning

Germany was given a warning that three of its provincial governments were violating European Union law by banning imports of British beef for fear of "mad cow" disease. The European Commission in Brussels gave the German Federal Government one month to offer reasons why it should not be taken to the European Court of Justice. It said the import bans violated EU free-trade rules.

Police race case

A black detective has been awarded an estimated £30,000 over an "unfair" annual appraisal by the Metropolitan Police, which he claimed affected his career and salary. Detective Constable Peter Franklin, based at Epsom, won the sum when the force settled his allegation of racial discrimination out of court. He has served 16 years with the Metropolitan Police.

Agreement close on election plan

Bosnia-style deal could revive Irish peace talks

By NICHOLAS WATT
AND PHILIP WEBSTER

BRITAIN and Ireland were edging closer last night to a deal to keep the Northern Ireland peace process on track. The agreement would involve Bosnia-style peace talks to be followed by elections.

As John Major prepared to publish a paper setting out his ideas for elections to a 90-strong assembly, John Bruton told the Irish Parliament that he was ready to talk about elections provided they led directly to the long-desired goal of all-party negotiations. But he made plain that elections should come after the so-called proximity talks involving all parties, similar to the conference in Dayton, Ohio, that settled the war in the former Yugoslavia.

Mr Bruton also criticised the Prime Minister for the speed with which he introduced his election plan within hours of the publication of the Mitchell report on decommissioning arms last month. However, his measured criticism marked a sharp contrast from his original reaction to

David Trimble was joined by a powerful senator yesterday in demanding that President Clinton should cancel the permission granted last March for Sinn Féin to raise funds in the United States, to help put pressure on the IRA to accept a genuine ceasefire. Mr Trimble, leader of the Ulster Unionist Party, visiting Washington, said Sinn Féin had raised £970,000 in the US. Jesse Helms, Republican chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, said fund-raising rights should be revoked if Mr Adams failed to denounce the latest bombing.

the elections plan, when he said he feared it would "pour petrol on the flames". Mr Major, who briefed the Rev Ian Paisley yesterday on his proposals for elections, hopes to publish his plans soon. Early ideas are for the body to be made up of about 90 members from 18 multi-member constituencies. They would form three groups who would pursue peace talks with representatives of the British

and Irish Governments. Voting would be by proportional representation.

Mr Bruton, who cut off ministerial contact with Sinn Féin after the Docklands bomb, said his Government's main priority was to find ways of bringing Sinn Féin back into the full political process. But he insisted that this could happen only if the IRA restored its ceasefire.

"No Government can allow murder, or the threat of murder, to set the political agenda," he said. "Our state is founded on democratic principles... If we accept violence in one area of life then we are opening the door to the acceptability of violence in other areas of life."

However, despite his condemnation of the IRA, his mild criticisms of Britain underlined the feeling in the Irish Republic that the ceasefire might have lasted had Britain done more to reward Sinn Féin. These sentiments were spelt out by Bertie Ahern, the former Prime Minister and leader of Fianna Fáil. He said that Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, bore most responsibility for the impasse.

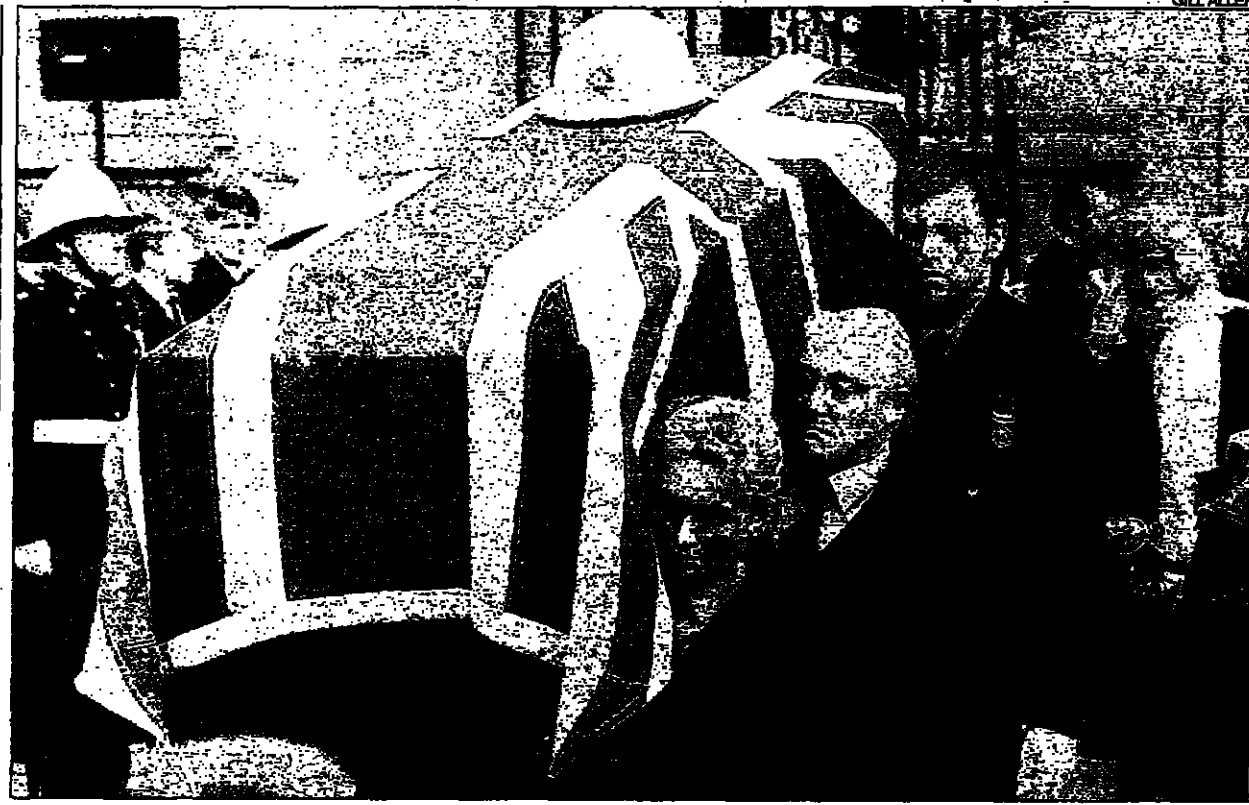
"Can it be that we are actually seeing the re-emergence of the old situation where Irish affairs are treated as nothing more than a pawn in the British political game?" he said. "A plausible case could be made for saying that Sir Patrick's job was to manage the Northern Ireland peace process in a way that ensured the survival of the Tory Government rather than the survival of the peace process itself."

Albert Reynolds, his predecessor as Irish Prime Minister, said yesterday that he believed the IRA would restore its ceasefire if a date was set for all-party talks. Mr Reynolds, whose Government helped to broker the ceasefire in 1994, was speaking after meeting Gerry Adams in Dundalk.

The Sinn Féin president said after the meeting that it would be difficult to put this back on the rails. But he came close to echoing Mr Reynolds's comments when he added: "Obviously the only way is for real talks and all-party talks. That is one of the reasons why it collapsed, because the British broke the commitment they made to bring that about."

Dick Spring, the Irish Deputy Prime Minister, called for a "process of intensive discussion" to overcome the stand-off over elections. He said that "clarifications" provided by Mr Major's statement yesterday would make it easier for the "elective approach" to be considered.

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Sue Osborne, right, who was with Miss Lombard on the day she died, helps to carry the coffin yesterday

Firefighters salute fallen colleague

By A STAFF REPORTER



Fleur Lombard: died when roof collapsed

FLEUR Lombard, the first woman firefighter to die on duty in Britain, was remembered yesterday by more than 1,000 uniformed officers from across the country, including her colleagues in Bristol, gathered for a cathedral funeral service.

Her black coffin, draped in a Union flag and bearing her yellow firefighter's helmet, was carried on a turntable ladder at the head of a cortege that marched through Derby, the city where she was born and where she first worked as a part-time firefighter.

Shoppers stood in silence as officers walked in a guard of honour to the cathedral, behind the fire appliance in

which the 21-year-old travelled to her last call-out.

Her parents, Roger and Jane, walked behind the coffin with other relatives. Miss Lombard was killed on February 4 as a roof collapsed, trapping her, as she tackled a blaze at Leo's Co-op store in Staple Hill, Bristol.

Before the service, Michael Saunders, 22, a colleague from Bristol, stood to attention at the foot of the medieval tower entrance to the cathedral holding Miss Lombard's silver axe, won after being commended as the best recruit on her training course two years ago.

Six of Miss Lombard's colleagues from Derbyshire and from Bristol carried her coffin through the cathedral. Among them was Sue Os-

borne, 23, her best friend and one of the seven remaining women employed by the Avon brigade, who was with Miss Lombard at the fire on the day she died. Alongside stood Rob Seaman, 27, who was standing with Miss Lombard as the roof collapsed on them both. He escaped with minor injuries.

Andrew Walters, Chief Fire Officer at Avon, told mourners: "We in Avon were lucky. We were the first to interview her. It is true to say that the watch were a little apprehensive. They had never had a female firefighter on the watch."

"They soon discovered their fears to be ill-founded. It was clear that Fleur was there to do the job she loved, not to make a point."

Newcastle officials move to force closure of school

By PAUL WILKINSON

ONE of Britain's worst schools in terms of truancy and exam failure has been earmarked for closure.

By recommending the closure of Blakelaw Comprehensive in the tough West End district of Newcastle upon Tyne, education officials have moved in advance of an inspection in October by the Office of Education Standards. Blakelaw is scheduled to close at the end of summer in 1997.

The Government's latest league tables show that last summer only one in ten pupils achieved five or more GCSE passes between grades A and C. The city's average was almost three times higher at 28 per cent, still well below the national average of 43.5 per cent. One in four of Blakelaw's pupils skipped classes.

Parents have already shown their attitude. With 563 pupils, the school is operating at little more than half its capacity. Built in 1965, it has the

smallest sixth form in Newcastle with just 18 students and only offers one A level course.

The pupils will be distributed among other schools in the area, but the 35 staff have yet to be told whether they will be re-employed.

Darren Murphy, Newcastle education committee chairman, said: "In the end you have to take the view — is it better to wait to reverse a decline, or is it better to take firm action? Young people only get one chance at a good education and it would not be right to wait for the inevitable which would be ever-decreasing numbers forcing the school to close anyway."

Terry Cooney, the governors' chairman, said: "I don't think there is any real alternative. I would like to see the school saved but there isn't a formula that allows it."

There was distress yesterday among staff many of whom first heard the news on local radio on their way to classes. Jeffery Curd, the head-

master, called an emergency assembly. Later he said: "Everyone at the school is very shocked and saddened. There is a strong feeling that many people do not appreciate what good work is going on inside this school. A lot of very good teachers work here with children, many of whom have quite difficult circumstances."

Results survey: Independent school pupils on assisted places outscored their fee-paying classmates in last summer's GCSE and A level examinations, according to results published yesterday (John O'Leary writes).

Teenagers benefiting from the Government's scheme for low-income families had a pass rate of 94 per cent for five higher-grade GCSEs, 3 per cent better than other independent school pupils and almost twice the national average. More than half taking A levels achieved A or B grades, compared with 41 per cent for all independent schools, the Independent Schools Information Service said.

Private cash for building

PIMLICO School, a symbol of the 1960s and comprehensive education, yesterday became the first state school to seek private funding for rebuilding. The pioneering project has the blessing of Jack Straw, its chairman of governors and the Shadow Home Secretary (David Charter writes).

Tory-controlled Westminster City Council aims to find £18.5 million from commercial backers to redesign, build and manage the school under the Government's private finance initiative.

Potential bidders will be able to recoup their investment by building housing on the site or running a private sports club using the school out of hours. The school's low-rise concrete and glass design won awards when it opened in 1970 but it has quickly fallen into disrepair. Annual upkeep costs £370,000.

Church now the Lib Dems at prayer

Continued from page 1
lack of the clear voice is damaging the Church. Part of the problem is that the synods, from deanery to General Synod, spend a great deal of time talking about things which do not necessarily matter. The people who serve on these bodies tend to be people who have time, money and the interest to do so. But they are not necessarily truly representative of the man or woman in the pew."

Lord Runcie, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, questioned the validity of the report. "I do not recognise some of the findings. The leaders of the Church of England are major players in the current debate about divorce reform. It is a major piece of moral legislation. They are doing what they can. But if the synod members think the answer is to make moral pronouncements then that is within their own power."

Lord Runcie believed that priority should be given to recruitment of young intelligent people to articulate the faith of the church. "It is raising the standard of church life, in the parishes of England, which matters most."

The closure of residential colleges, for financial reasons, creates a danger of getting clerical training on the cheap. There is no substitute for well-trained good quality clergy who are able to articulate the

problem and do something about solutions. Peter Bruinvels, a synod member of the Guildford diocese and a former Tory MP, said of the bishops: "They need some strong leadership themselves. The problem is they do not want to offend anybody and the result is they offend everybody. I understand it, they just want to be popular and they want to be loved."

Mr Bruinvels said that when he was first elected to the synod in 1985 he was one of four elected Tory MPs, now there is only one — Sir Patrick Cormack. Mr Bruinvels accepted that Conservative influence in the Church was declining, but

said there were "still plenty of Tories on the General Synod". But the Rev Andrew Burnham, vice principal of the Oxford theological college St Stephen's House, said: "I vote Labour because Labour espouses virtues of social democracy and can bring these principles into power. I don't know any Tories in the Church, although I think some might vote Tory secretly. I think there has been a move to the Left since the 1960s."

The Rev Eric Shegog said the Church could no longer be seen as the Tory Party at prayer, but said the move was mainly towards the centre ground.

Leading article, page 17

Three counties defy budget limits

By IAN MURRAY
COMMUNITY CORRESPONDENT

THREE of the first four English counties to set their budgets agreed yesterday to spend more than the Government allows over the next year.

Oxfordshire and Cambridgeshire want to raise council tax beyond government limits to pay for the increase. Wiltshire is to dig deep into its reserves to finance its over-spend.

The increases are only the beginning of the extra amount residents will have to pay. The final bills will include not only the figure for the county but the additional amounts levied by districts and parishes. All three are hung councils

and the budgets for them were agreed only because Labour and the Liberal Democrats voted together against Tory councillors who wanted to stay inside the government-imposed spending limits.

Cambridgeshire decided on a £408 million budget, which is £5.8 million above its cap. If the council can now persuade the Government to approve the budget, residents will face an initial 9 per cent increase in council tax plus inevitable further rises in the amounts yet to be levied by district and parish councils.

Even if it is allowed to raise the extra money the council still plans to close four libraries and cut the other libraries' opening hours. The transport

and social services budgets will each be cut by £2 million. Cambridgeshire avoided breaking through its cap last year by drawing £7 million from its reserves, which are now so low that the auditor has advised it would be dangerous to withdraw more.

Oxfordshire voted to spend more than its cap but last night councillors were still arguing about how far to go. The Government has set a limit of £332 million for the county, which claims it needs £344 just to maintain services. Even at the capping level, council tax for the county will have to rise by 6.2 per cent before district and parish precepts are levied. The year before last Oxfordshire drew

£8.6 million from its reserves, which are down to £3 million.

Wiltshire, which had a spending cap of £330, decided to draw £5.85 million from its reserves to boost its budget to £336 million. Some savings will be made in administration costs, but all front-line services are to be preserved. Council tax for the county will rise by 1.6 per cent.

Breaking through the cap is an expensive gamble. If councils fail to persuade the Government that they are justified, they have to rebill council tax payers at an average cost of £500,000. That so many appear ready to take the risk shows how sincerely they believe they need to raise more money to maintain services.

Windfall of £10bn for cereal farmers

Women win case

House on judge

Team bar

Desperately seeking synergy

So long then, Videotron. Or rather, Videotron, the Canadian owners of Britain's sixth largest cable television company are pulling back to Montreal, to concentrate their money in North America where they can see some reward.

It is fitting that Kenneth Baker, MP remains on the board of the British company, which is seeking new investors to buy the Canadian stake. Videotron Holdings will continue to operate the Videotron cable franchises in London and the South East. It was Mr Baker, as Trade and Industry Secretary, who in 1981 beckoned Britain down the golden road leading to the "wired nation". Fifteen years later, however, the road is murky. British homes which have been lured by multi-channel television have been chosen, by about four to one, to receive these extra channels from a satellite and a dish on the roof, not from a duct in the ground.

The low popularity of cable in those areas where it has been laid is the main reason for Videotron's withdrawal. Only 20.8 per cent of homes offered the service have taken it. This is less than half the penetration rate achieved in the United States — the inspiration for Mr Baker's dream.

Britain's comparative indifference, however, reflects, perversely, to Mr Baker's credit, his insistence that the television cable must be buried underground. In America it hangs thickly festooned from telephone poles. Burying cable greatly increases the costs of installing a system and the high cost greatly discouraged British investors.

As a result, years went by before cable was installed on any appreciable scale and the main investors have been giant North American telephone companies. In the meantime, satellite television offered by BSkyB (40 per cent owned by News International, the owner of *The Times*) got a headstart.

But Videotron may be pulling out of Britain at just the wrong time. The old dream of the wired nation was based on technical reality: the same capacitors cable, brings, in television pictures can also bring in telecommunications — voice, telephone calls and computer data. And suddenly in Britain, unlike America, cable telephone has taken off. By undercutting British Telecom's



BRENDA MADDOX

rates, the cable industry now has more telephone customers (1,216,375) than it has television subscribers (1,159,774).

Other prospects are brightening too. The Office of Fair Trading has decided to investigate the industry's complaints that BSkyB is abusing its dominance of the pay-TV market. Also, starting this autumn, BT will have to allow cable telephone subscribers "number portability": you will be able to switch to cable telephone and take your BT number with you — until now, you had to switch numbers.

Most important is that cable has now reached a critical mass. One-quarter of homes now have access to cable television, a share that will rise to 40 per cent by the end of the year. A national advertising campaign will shortly be launched, to boost cable's generic advantages, such as telephone, and its local programmes, such as London's Live TV and Channel One.

So the dream was not a pipe-dream. In the long run, cable will catch on and make money for its investors. But will the long wait have been worth it? Obviously Le Groupe Videotron, which is not one of the North American giants, has decided not.

The same question, "Is it worth it?", hangs over last week's mysterious merger of MAI, the group which controls the ITV companies, Meridian and Anglia, with United News and Media, which publishes the *Daily Express*. There is no logic to it, just the same hazy faith in synergy — that some-day information and entertainment, print and screen will all wash as one big tub of electronic data.

But Lord Hollick, head of MAI, seems to be convinced that the short-term gains from cross-promotion of television by newspapers justifies allying his company with the owners of the declining *Express*. MAI owns a chunk of the new Channel 5, the terrestrial channel which starts next January.

Just to grow bigger may be sufficient motive in itself. The trick is to do it without getting too big. The Independent Television Commission's limits on audience and advertising share stand in the way of the instinct to get as big as possible.

Andrew Mitchell on how Coca-Cola is using discovery marketing

Letting the secret out of the can



Cherry Coke wants people to "discover" the drink themselves

So along to Mayfair's trendiest club sometime this month and, if you're young enough to enter, you'll find a different world. The place is draped in black and red; there are cherries everywhere. Cherry Productions, which has kindly laid on the evening's entertainment, has also provided hairdresses, make-up artists, Red or Dead fashion clothes, and before-and-after photographs for punters who want to leave their old selves behind.

If everything goes right for Cherry Productions, one month, 1,000 young souls will leave the club with a new brand on their lips. And they'll pass the message on, via youth culture's jungle drums.

Cherry Productions' problem is that it is a front for the world's biggest marketing machine — Coca-Cola. But it has to content itself with tiny, low-profile promotions like this because anything more might frighten away its target market.

Since the brand it is pushing — Cherry Coke — was launched in the UK ten years ago hardly a penny has been spent on advertising it. Yet teenagers are buying it in ever-greater numbers (sales have doubled over the past two years) partly because, its marketers suspect, they have done nothing to market it. Youngsters have discovered the brand for themselves, says Andrew Medd, the marketing manager.

Now that upstart Virgin Cola has introduced curvy new containers that give a strong and cheeky hint of the famous Coca-Cola bottle, Cherry Coke marketers hope their club nights will help solve their dilemma. They are entering the subterranean world of "discovery marketing", where a verbal recommendation has far more influence than a TV commercial; where being different really matters; where the measure of a brand's "in-ness" is, in part, a product of its obscurity.

Cherry Coke is now being relaunched as "different". And it is a relaunch with a difference, of course. No fanfares. No glitzy ad campaigns. Even Cherry's new packaging is being kept under wraps. Literally.

Its old bubblegum-pink design ("It was the pram queen of soft drinks," confesses one of its marketing team) is being replaced by black and red street-cred graffiti-style packaging (for which Coca-Cola has invented a

the cause of different things happening. We want to attach ourselves to people who do different things," Medd says.

Typical Coca-Cola hype? Of course. But it also represents a shift. Traditional mass advertising is having to play second fiddle to new communication channels. In the end, there will be TV ads, but only after months of stunts have spread the word among teenagers.

And Coca-Cola is even prepared to alienate some potential consumers. Strong negative reactions by some can help spur greater loyalty among others, and that is much better than mass indifference, suggests George Bratt, Coca-Cola's UK marketing director.

But Cherry Coke represents a bigger difference for the Coca-Cola marketing machine. The main brand is like a super-tanker, says Bratt. Even the slightest touch to the tiller — a change to the formula, a new advertising campaign, a tweak to the re-vered packaging and design — is a momentous multi-million dollar decision with global ramifications. Coca-Cola marketers are, in effect, slaves to the brand's heritage. In contrast, the whole point about a brand like Cherry Coke is that "it can reinvent itself every year," says Bratt. That makes difference "a fascinating strategy".

Behind that, there is an even bigger shift. Caught napping by the rise of so-called New Age drinks like Snapple, and amid signs that leading-edge American consumers are turning away from oversweet fizzy drinks, Coca-Cola is busy trying to turn itself into a "total beverages" company.

In Japan it is huge in coffee. In America and parts of Europe it is big in orange juice. And having burnt its fingers with the disastrous launch of New Coke a decade ago, the company is now desperately trying to summon up the courage to innovate. "We have to accept that some will succeed and some will fail," says Bratt.

One recent failure is OK Soda. A carbonate delivered in grey grunge packaging, it was introduced into the US with street-cred imagery and targeted at teenagers. And they swiftly shunned it. The product has since been withdrawn. "There was some terrific learning," says Bratt. Cherry Coke, he adds, will be different.

How to sell 200m extra newspapers

Brian MacArthur on the rapidly-rising Sun

A NEW record sale of 4,670,000 (almost outstripping its Sunday stablemate, the *News of the World*) was achieved by *The Sun* on the last Saturday in January. Its booming Saturday sales lifted the paper to an average sale last month of 4,128,000, up 22,000 on a year ago, according to the Audit Bureau of Circulations.

Since its cover price was slashed to 20p in June 1993, *The Sun* has increased sales by more than 660,000 — selling an extra 200 million more papers a year — and has doubled its lead over the *Daily Mirror* to more than 1.5 million a day. *The Sun* now accounts for almost one in three national daily sales, in spite of recent price rises.

At an average of 687,992, up 56,000 on a year ago, *The Times* also set a new sales record. Since the cover price was reduced in 1993, sales are up by 333,000 and still increasing, again in spite of recent increases in price. Its share of the daily broadsheet market has almost doubled to 25 per cent.

The effect of cutting prices (and subsequently increasing them in gentle doses) has boosted sales of tabloids (up 274,000 year-on-year) and broadsheets (54,000). There is a more dramatic change, however: in three of the past seven months, the daily broadsheets have, for the first time, outsold the heavyweight Sundays. The reason is the success of the dailies' bumper Saturday editions, seen increasingly as serious rivals to the Sundays. More papers are now sold on Saturday than any other day of the week.

Meanwhile an urgent priority for Clive Hollick, the Labour peer who will soon be chief executive of the merged MAI/United Newspapers group which owns *Express Newspapers*, is to stop declining sales. Three of the five papers with the biggest falls in sales last month were *Express* titles, with the *Sunday Express* down year-on-year by 152,000, the *Daily Star* down by 58,200 and the *Daily Express* down by 31,200.

WINNERS AND LOSERS		
Title	Average sales (000s)	% change on Jan 95
Daily Mail	2,068	+14.0
The Times	688	+8.0
The Mail on Sunday	2,134	+8.7
Financial Times	298	+5.7
Daily Mirror	2,560	+4.0
Sunday Express	1,286	-10.8
The Observer	448	-5.0
Daily Star	588	-7.8
News of the World	4,717	-2.8
Daily Express	1,265	-2.4

Source: ABC — January 1996

MEDIA, SALES & MARKETING

“So, are we quite clear about the kind of sales person we are looking for?”

SALES DIRECTOR: “I think there's no doubt the right person for us will be very sharp and switched-on. Someone who will fit nicely into our team culture. And won't have an arrogant, aggressive manner.”

MARKETING DIRECTOR: “It is no good just looking for a bright sales orientated person. They'll need to understand their strategic role within the overall plan. Someone who's going to understand and push our marketing strategy forward.”

MANAGING DIRECTOR: “Whoever we find will need to enjoy the challenge of dealing with our blue chip network of major companies. And they will need to have the drive and confidence to open up new opportunities in that marketplace.”

SALES DIRECTOR: “I'm certain we need someone who'd welcome the opportunity of unlimited earnings where the sky's the limit! Someone who's hungry.”

MARKETING DIRECTOR: “Yes, hungry, but without letting it show. You know, the kind of person who enjoys the applause as much as the reward. They've got to be fun to be with. A real optimist - someone who always goes for it!”

SALES DIRECTOR: “The kind who likes to work hard and play hard! Who really loves to be with people.”

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Kenneth Branagh in a 17th-century sex shocker

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The growth of unusual venues to get married

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Simon Barnes steps back in time with Wigan

TELEVISION AND RADIO
Pages 46, 47

THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 14 1996

National Lottery scratchcards down on their luck



SALES of National Lottery scratchcards hit their lowest level last week, amid signs of growing hostility in the crowded UK scratchcard market. Instant sales slipped to £193.3 million, crowding seven successive weeks of lacklustre performance.

Sales have been falling steadily from a weekly peak of £44.4 million in May 1995, not long after instant sales were launched. Camelot, the National Lottery operator, has introduced several new games in the hope of boosting sales, but without success. It faces additional challenges from rival operators, such as Littlewoods, the pools group. Scratch-n-Win, backed by Lord Mancroft, the anti-drugs peer, and Lucky Lotto, which is advertising heavily to try to boost sales. Interest in the televised National Lottery draw has boosted on-line ticket sales well above the "usual" spend of about £65 million a week. On-line sales peaked at nearly £128 million in the week of the double roll-over in early January, and were £75.5 million in the week to February 10. Sales of instant scratchcards were running at £25 million or more a week until Christmas, but have tailed off sharply since then.

Camelot always expected instant sales to account for 20 to 30 per cent of total sales, and says that the decline mirrors the pattern overseas. However, current levels are at the low end of expectations, and there are signs that the public has become confused by the wide variety of games on offer.

Camelot currently has ten games on sale, including Noughts & Crosses and

Acas High. Scratch-n-Win has six on sale. Littlewoods runs several games on behalf of specific charities, and claims sales of £1.4 million a week.

Scratch-n-Win will not disclose precise figures, but expects sales to top £100 million "comfortably" this year, if January is anything to go by.

UK Charity Lotteries, the name behind Lucky Lotto, hopes to reap an extra £300,000 a week in sales from its current advertising blitz. Weekly sales are currently running at about £1.3 million.

For every £1 spent on a Camelot scratchcard, 12 per cent goes to the Government, 5 per cent to retailers, 5 per cent to the company and 28 per cent to the five "good causes" that benefit from lottery funds. The company is supposed to put the remaining 50p into the prize pool, but in fact puts 55p into it for every card sold. It is able to do this because it effectively subsidises the scratchcard prizes from the money it gets from its on-line game.

Peter Davis, Director General of the National Lottery, allows this because the overall amount of money that Camelot puts into the combined pool of its scratchcard and on-line games comes to about 50 per cent.

Charity scratchcard operators have long complained that this is unfair. Unlike Camelot, charity scratchcards are ruled by the Gaming Board, which insists that the charities put only 50p per £1 scratchcard into the prize pool.

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET		
FT-SE 100	3747.5	(+21.0)
Yield	3.97%	
FT-SE A-All share	1841.55	(+8.32)
Nikkei	20784.23	(-150.55)
New York		
Dow Jones	5609.54	(+8.33)
S&P Composite	662.35	(+0.90)
US RATE		
Federal Funds	5 1/4%	(5 1/4%)
Long Bond	99 1/8%	(99 1/8%)
Yield	6.02%	(6 04%)
LONDON MONEY		
3-month Interbank	6 1/4%	(6 1/4%)
Life long gilt	108 1/4	(108 1/4)
Future (Mar)		
STERLING		
New York		
\$	1.5342*	(1.5290)
London	1.5343	(1.5309)
DM	2.2678	(2.2542)
FF	7.8050	(7.7510)
SF	1.2620	(1.2565)
Yen	164.05	(163.31)
E Index	84.2	(83.8)
DOLLAR		
London		
DM	1.4778*	(1.4762)
FF	5.0630*	(5.0750)
SF	1.2065*	(1.2065)
Yen	106.80*	(106.85)
\$ Index	86.2	(86.0)
Tokyo close Yen	106.57	
NORTH SEA OIL		
Brent 15-day (Apr)	\$17.10	(\$16.35)
GOLD		
London close	\$401.95	(\$400.45)
* denotes midday trading price		

Asil Nadir 'laundered £400,000 stolen funds'

ASIL NADIR, the fugitive businessman, 'laundered' £400,000 in stolen funds through Swiss bank accounts in order to pay personal debts, the Central Criminal Court heard yesterday.

The money was channelled from Polly Peak International (PPI), once one of the UK's top performing companies, and used to pay stockbroking fees and other private expenses.

Details of the alleged transactions emerged at the opening of the trial of Elizabeth Forsyth, former financial adviser to Mr Nadir. Mrs Forsyth, 59, of Great Dunmow, Essex, denied two counts of handling £307,000 and £88,050 in stolen funds in October 1989. She was appearing at Chichester Road, the Central Criminal Court, annex on Chancery Lane.

David Calvert-Smith, opening the prosecution for the Serious Fraud Office, told the jury of seven women and five men that Mr Nadir used Mrs Forsyth to disguise the fact that he was using company funds to pay private debts. In October 1989, the court heard, Mr Nadir needed a large sum of money to pay some private debts. He allegedly stole the money from PPI and used Mrs Forsyth to launder the money so that no trace of its origins remained.

Mrs Forsyth's 88-year-old mother, Margaret McAlpine, joined onlookers in the courtroom. Mr Calvert-Smith told the jury that PPI grew rapidly after Mr Nadir became chairman in 1980. Within seven years, it had interests in America, the Far East, Turkey and northern Cyprus, and, by 1989, was ranked as one of the UK's top 100 companies. One of the northern Cyprus subsid-



Elizabeth Forsyth, right, with Margaret McAlpine, her 88-year-old mother, yesterday

Reuters hints at cash pile bonus for shareholders

REUTERS, the financial information and electronic trading group, hinted yesterday that it will announce a share buyback or special dividend by next year in an effort to reduce its £850 million mountain of cash.

Peter Job, chief executive, said: "We are actively exploring ways of returning surplus cash to shareholders in a manner consistent with the interest of all shareholders."

Market expectations boosted Reuters shares by 31p to 675p, a record high.

A buyback appears the more likely of the options. Reuters, having completed a £350 million buyback in 1993, then equivalent to 4 per cent of its equity, knows how to solve the associated tax and legal problems.

The cash pile at Reuters grew by £16 million over the past year as the company recorded strong revenue and profit growth in its global operations. Few acquisitions and slightly lower capital spending added to the cash reserves. The desire to return

George uneasy about rate cut

EDDIE GEORGE, Governor of the Bank of England, last night hinted that he had disagreed with the Chancellor over January's quarter-point cut in interest rates but insisted that their differences were narrow and technical (Janet Bush writes). Speaking on the BBC on the eve of today's publication of the Bank's Inflation Report, Mr George said: "To the extent that we took different views, it would have been about a narrow, a very narrow point."

The two had agreed on the commitment to price stability.

BAe joins US consortium for Harrier replacement

BRITISH AEROSPACE and McDonnell Douglas of the United States have unveiled plans for a tail-less aircraft to replace the Harrier jump jet and the F16 Eagle, the world's most successful post-war strike aircraft.

The supersonic jet, steered by its engine, is one of three designs competing for £10 billion of development funds under a joint US-British programme. British Aerospace, teamed with Northrop Grumman as well as McDonnell, is determined to earn a 10 per cent stake in a programme that could sell 3,000 to 4,000 aircraft worth more than \$80 billion over the next 50 years.

Rival designs are being drawn up by Lockheed Martin, the world's biggest defence contractor, which has bought technology from Yakovlev of Russia, and by Boeing. But BAe hopes its experience in developing the Harrier, produced under licence for the US Marine Corps by McDonnell

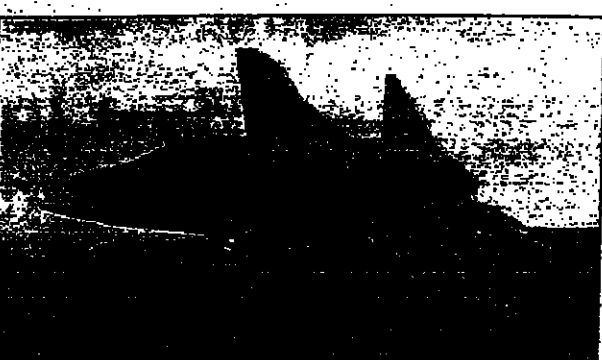
Barings investors to proceed with writs

INVESTORS who lost more than £100 million in the collapse of Barings will today authorise lawyers to issue writs against former senior executives at the bank, and three leading City houses that participated in the bond issue.

Jonathan Stone, the lawyer heading the Barings Bondholders' action group, said that writs aimed at recovering the original £100 million as well as a further £9 million in lost interest payments, and all the costs involved, should be issued shortly.

The three former executives of Barings, which crashed almost a year ago with debts of £860 million run up by the dealings of Nick Leeson on the Far East money markets, have been named as Peter Baring, the former chairman, Andrew Tucker, his deputy, and Peter Norris, chief executive officer of investment operations.

Writs are also to be served on City houses that participated in the January 1994 bond issue, including Hoare Govett, part of ABN Amro, the Dutch



Wings and prayers: the BAe consortium's tail-less fighter

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Unilever wins fight with taxman

BY OUR CITY STAFF

UNILEVER, the multinational trading group, yesterday won a £17 million battle with the taxman.

Sir Thomas Blomfield, Master of the Rolls, said in a judgment in the Court of Appeal that the Inland Revenue had abused its powers with a company that had a reputation as a "model taxpayer".

He said it had disallowed corporation tax rebate claims by Unilever to take into account trading losses because the company had not complied with a two-year time limit.

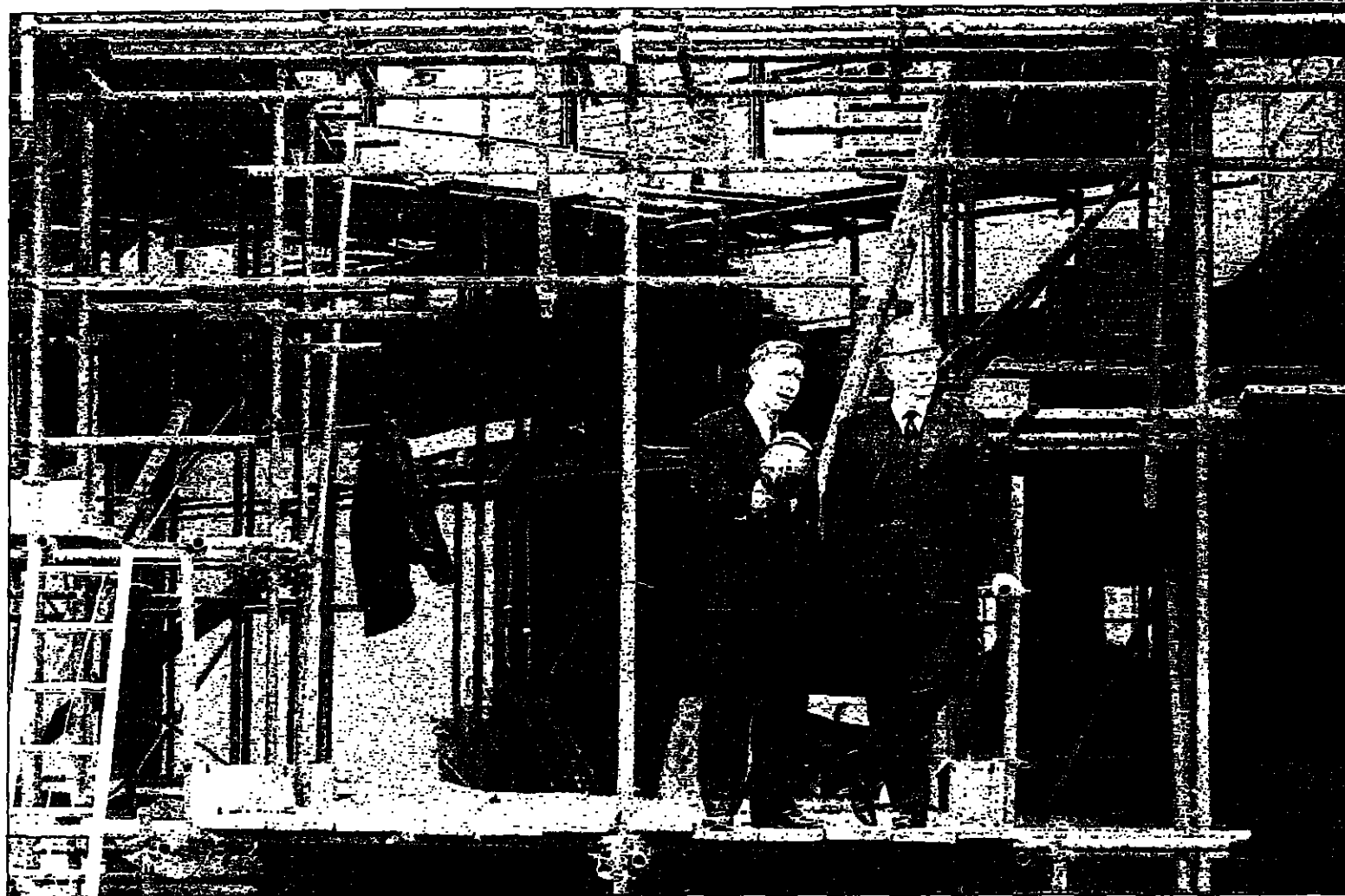
Legislation was amended from March 31, 1991, so that claims must be made within two years unless the Revenue allows longer.

But in an examination of 1,247 Unilever companies for accounting periods since 1969, there were 116 instances of trading losses. Of those, only 40 tax claims were presented after the two-year period's expiry.

The Revenue challenged ten of these, but allowed 30 "without comment or question or objection". Sir Thomas said Unilever and the Revenue had a "consensual procedure" that had worked for many years.

When the Revenue objected to the loss relief and demanded full payment, Unilever applied for judicial review in the High Court where it was ruled that the Revenue could not in fairness, having regard to its past conduct, treat the claim as time-barred.

Dismissing the Revenue's appeal, Sir Thomas said that to reject Unilever's claims in reliance on the time limit, without clear notice, was so unfair as to amount to an abuse of power.



Anthony Glossop, left, chief executive of St Modwen Properties, and Stan Clarke, chairman, increased the total dividend 31 per cent to 2.1p a share after reporting a 6.4 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £10 million for the year to November 30. Net assets rose 8.2 per cent to 53p a share

Construction orders rise but outlook still gloomy

BY JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

CONSTRUCTION orders reached their highest level for two years in December but the industry still gave a warning that its workload would continue to decline and job losses escalate during the early part of this year.

The Construction Industry Employers Council (CIEC) lambasted the Government for failing to give momentum to the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and so replace cuts in construction capital spending.

The Department of the Environment said that the total volume of new orders in the fourth quarter was 21 per cent higher than in the third quarter, and 20 per cent higher than in the final three months of 1994.

However, it gave a warning that the jump in orders was the result of a small number of large contracts in the private commercial and industrial sectors. It noted that, overall, orders in 1995 were 4 per cent down on the previous year because of sharp drops in both the public and private housing sectors.

Martin Laing, chairman of the CIEC, acknowledged that yesterday's figures were encouraging and that they could constitute the first genuine sign that construction orders could be on the start of an upward path. But he still insisted that there is considerable uncertainty.

Mr Laing said that there were two urgent requirements that must be met if the continuing decline in the construction industry was to be reversed: a return to confidence in the housing market and Government action to galvanise the Private Finance Initiative into generating substantial numbers of new projects quickly.

Mr Laing said the Government had repeatedly expressed the wish to set an example as a "best practice client" of the construction industry. However, it had conspicuously failed to do this in three crucial areas — the need for quality instead of the lowest price, the need for single-point responsibility for projects, and the Government's poor track record on prompt payments.

He added: "We are committed to making a success of the PFI but our commitment is not open-ended. We cannot continue to tolerate the prohibitively high tendering costs for PFI projects which we are facing at present."

Mr Laing also complained about low investment, including in construction, claiming that to date the share of annual output going to this end had dropped by a quarter in the 1990s. However, he was more hopeful on prospects for the housing market, saying that tax cuts taking effect in two months' time would help, as long as interest rates are pitched and maintained at the lowest possible level.

Singapore BICC ban contested

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

ACTION by the Singapore authorities to ban a subsidiary of BICC, the cable and construction operation, from new government contracts in the next five years brought a swift appeal from the company, which yesterday announced cablemaking expansion in Asia-Pacific.

News of the ban, which affects all work with Singapore's Public Utilities Board, with whom BICC has worked for more than ten years, cannot derail BICC's plans to build a cablemaking factory in Indonesia.

A spokesman for BICC said that allegations of corruption which led to Singapore's ban would be contested. Singapore named five companies in relation to the conviction of a key official at the Public Utilities Board, who was recently jailed for 14 years for corruption and criminal conspiracy. The other companies were Siemens of Germany, Italy's Pirelli and Japan's Tomen Corporation and Marubeni Corporation.

BICC said that it is pumping \$11 million into a \$45 million cablemaking factory in Indonesia. BICC is also establishing a data cable systems business in the Philippines at a cost of \$10 million.

Pennington, page 27

Superscape shares soar on IBM deal

SHARES in Superscape VR surged 75p to 539p after the virtual reality software company unveiled a potentially lucrative worldwide distribution deal — thought to be worth more than \$3 million — with IBM, the US computer group.

IBM will market and sell Superscape's virtual reality software and related services, such as consultancy and training, throughout Europe, the Middle East, Africa and the former USSR. Agreements covering the Asia-Pacific and important North and South American markets are also in the offing. Superscape's market capitalisation has increased from £38.8 million to £45 million.

Atari plans merger

ATARI, the US computer and video games company, is to merge with JTS Corp, a privately owned disk-drive manufacturer, as part of a diversification away from entertainment. Atari has had difficulty maintaining its position in the games industry against Sega and Nintendo, its Japanese rivals. Atari shareholders will own 60 per cent of the merged company. JTS was formed in 1994 by Jugi Tandon, the company's chairman. He will be chairman of the new company.

Sun Alliance slips

SHARES in Sun Alliance fell 6p to 362p yesterday after Chubb Corp, its US partner, announced it was reducing the amount of business the two insurers cede to each other. Annually, Sun Alliance supplies £200 million of business to Chubb and receives £300 million back. Sun Alliance confirmed business was likely to reduce by a third this year, next year, and a further third in 1998. A spokesman for the UK insurer said the partnership had been working since 1982. Chubb holds 5 per cent of Sun Alliance, while Sun holds under 3 per cent of Chubb.

Earle leads action group

FRASER EARLE, a former chief executive of Standard Chartered's China business, will head an action group of shareholders in two Classic Bloodstock companies, the troubled racing investment group that has raised nearly £5 million from 7,000 investors. At an emergency meeting of Classic Bloodstock II last month, it emerged that the company had raised £2.7 million of which £1.4 million was spent on postage and stationery and a further £1 million on promotion and marketing. Only £91,170 was spent on purchasing six horses.

Biotrace chief named

BIOTRACE INTERNATIONAL, the biotech diagnostics company where Brian Levett, chief executive, left abruptly in November, will today name his successor. Jim Keir, until last April managing director of Amersham International's international trading and technologies division, is joining immediately. Biotrace, whose main products detect food contamination and are based on the enzyme that allows fireflies to glow in the dark, floated in November 1993 at a price of 130p. Yesterday the shares closed at 39p.

US pay rising slowly

AMERICAN workers' pay and benefits rose by 2.9 per cent last year, the smallest annual increase since the US Government began tracking such changes in 1982. The US Labor Department said that the rise in its Employment Cost Index was held back by the tiniest advance on record in benefits such as health care and holidays. Many analysts had expected an even smaller employee cost increase last year, of about 2.6 per cent. The previous yearly low for the index was 3 per cent in 1994.

Danka raises £128m

DANKA BUSINESS SYSTEMS, the office equipment supplier whose shares are listed in London, has placed 17 million shares, mostly in the form of American Depositary Shares (ADS), with institutional investors at \$42 per ADS, equivalent to 683p a share. Each ADS represents four ordinary shares. Proceeds of the placing, estimated at £128.4 million, will be used to reduce borrowings arising from the acquisition of Infotech Europe BV. Existing Danka shares fell 3p to 700p yesterday.

Fisons Scientific ahead

FISONS Scientific Instruments saw a strong turnaround with operating profits of £5.7 million in the 12 months to December 31. The company lost £9.8 million in the previous year and £38 million in 1993. The recovery was attributed to a 10 per cent rise in turnover to £286.3 million and costs cuts. Employees were reduced by 9 per cent to 2,796 by the year end. Fisons Scientific Instruments is now owned by Rhone Poulenc Rorer, which is negotiating its sale to Thermo Instruments Systems of the US for £202 million.

Warning from EMH

SHARES in European Motor Holdings fell 18p to 82p yesterday after the company said that annual profits would fall to about £6.5 million before tax from a reported £7.9 million in the previous 12 months. Richard Palmer, chief executive, said that trading in the motor retail division had fallen significantly below budget in the past two months. This reflected adverse weather conditions and a change in product cycles by auto manufacturers. Depressed retail demand had affected initial contributions from new franchises.

TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia \$	2.12	1.98
Austria Sch	13.68	13.30
Belgium Fr	48.27	45.07
Canada Cdn	2.20	2.04
Cyprus Cyp£	0.756	0.701
Denmark Kr	9.34	8.54
Finland Mk	7.94	6.86
France Fr	6.17	5.82
Germany Dm	2.41	2.20
Greece Dr	352.00	357.00
Hong Kong \$	12.48	11.48
Ireland Ir£	1.02	0.94
Israel Sh	5.100	4.510
Italy Lira	2512.00	2257.00
Japan Yen	177.40	161.40
Norway Kr	10.44	9.57
Netherlands Gld	2.678	2.448
New Zealand \$	1.60	1.48
Portugal Esc	245.50	227.00
S Africa Rd	198.50	183.50
Spain Ptas	11.23	10.43
Switzerland Fr	57	50.40
Turkey Lira	ref	5040.7
USA \$	1.827	1.497

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

Hi-tech campaign starts

BY PHILIP PANGALOS

IAN LANG, President of the Board of Trade, yesterday launched a £35 million four-year initiative to help UK businesses to plug into the opportunities offered by new information and communication technologies.

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) chose Canary Wharf, in the London Docklands, as the venue to launch its Information Society Initiative (ISI) in spite of last week's IRA bomb outrage.

The ISI, aimed at smaller and medium-sized companies, will focus on demonstrating the problem-solving capabilities of technology. The DTI plans seminars and roadshows to encourage use of electronic networking, video conferencing and other electronic services. A recent survey found that 25 per cent of firms in America regularly use e-mail, against just 3 per cent in this country, and about 40 per cent of companies in the UK have no computers.

The ISI will offer 50 local support centres, providing hands-on experience, building on the Business Links network.

Mr Lang said: "It is enormously important to increase the competitiveness of British industry."

So civilised, the French method of receivership

BY JONATHAN PRYNN, PATRICIA TEHAN AND BEN MACINTYRE

IT IS a very French way to sort out a business. Rather than the shattered careers, massive job losses and brutal finality that goes with the Anglo-Saxon system of receivership, the French send in impartial mediators to seek a civilised solution.

The *mandataires ad hoc* system, introduced in 1984 has been tried many times before but never on a company remotely as large as Eurotunnel, nor on a multinational.

Lord Wakeham and Robert Badinter, the two mediators appointed last week, have no fixed term of contract and are not obliged to make a formal report at the end of their deliberations.

They can see who they like, meeting when they like and where they like. As Sir Alastair Morton put it, they can hold their meetings in a bar if they want to — the emphasis is on informality. The best translation of *mandataires ad hoc* might be a "wise man" or *amicus curiae*, a friend of the court.

Their priority is to find a solution to an employer's problems that will preserve jobs, not to act as the representative of a baying mob of creditors as under the Anglo-Saxon tradition.

French law emphasises, in order of priority, the continuation of the company and the jobs it provides, the preservation of the shareholders' interests and finally those of creditors.

Their eventual recommendations, if any are produced, are non-binding and can only be implemented with the agreement of the main parties involved.

Although few of the many parties involved in the Eurotunnel crisis objected to the appointments yesterday, there is little optimism that they will find an acceptable compromise solution to a problem that has eluded some of the finest financial brains in London and Paris.

Eurotunnel's banks were last night trying to take a positive view of the development. Although some have expressed concern that Eurotunnel might use the appointment of mediators as a negotiating tool, bringing the threat of liquidation closer, others said it might actually help to resolve the deadlock in talks.



Wakeham: no fixed term

NOTICE TO HALIFAX INVESTORS

Halifax Building Societies announces new rates for Special Reserve Bond, Treasury's Account, Bonus Gold and Solid Gold accounts, from 15th February 1996. All other interest rates on investment accounts remain unchanged. Full details of all other interest rates for Liquid Gold and other Halifax investment accounts are available at any Halifax branch.

The rates shown apply to both the deposit and share account versions of these products.

	UK RATES	NON-RESIDENT RATES	NON-PERSONAL RATES
	Fixed Rate	Fixed Rate	Fixed Rate
SPECIAL RESERVE BOND (£10,000+)	6.20	4.65	-
BONUS GOLD (Inc. bonus)			
£10,000+	6.00	4.50	6.00
£25,000+	5.75	4.25	5.75
£50,000+	5.50	4.00	5.50
£100,000+	5.25	3.75	5.25
Monthly Income Option (Inc. bonus)			
£10,000+	5.65	4.00	5.65
£25,000+	5.40	3.75	5.40
£50,000+	5.15	3.50	5.15
£100,000+	4.90	3.25	4.90
SOLID GOLD			
£10,000+	5.10	3.81	5.10
£25,000+	4.85	3.56	4.85
£50,000+	4.60	3.31	4.60
£100,000+	4.35	3.06	4.35
Monthly Income Option			
£10,000+	4.95	3.10	4.95
£25,000+	4.70	2.85	4.70
£50,000+	4.45	2.60	4.45
£100,000+	4.20	2.35	4.20
LIQUID GOLD			
£10,000+	4.80	3.50	4.80
£25,000+	4.55	3.25	4.55
£50,000+	4.30	3.00	4.30
£100,000+	4.05	2.75	4.05
TREASURY'S ACCOUNT			
£2,500+	4.50	3.38	4.50
£5,000+	4.25	3.13	4.25
£10,000+	4.00	2.88	4.00

POINTS TO NOTE: Interest will be paid net after basic rate income tax (currently 25%), but we believe it has been taken off unless you have completed a registration form or made a declaration to exempt it from income tax. The net rate shown, which we will pay, is based on the assumption that you have not been taxed. All interest rates quoted are annual rates. Special rates of interest on certain accounts apply to investors who appear on our records as being under 21. If your account balance is less than £50 you will not receive any interest unless you appear on our records as being under 21. Compounded annual rates (C.A.R.) apply when full interest remains in your account. The maximum rates of interest are payable to individuals who are not residents in the UK, and who complete an appropriate declaration form. Personal Gold and Liquid Gold are personal accounts (such as accounts held by clubs, charities and trusts) are not available to new customers. Full account conditions and details of what interest is paid and how to qualify for the bonus Gold bonus are available from any Halifax branch.

Please note that from 1st April 1996 income tax will be taken off at the lowest rate and not at the basic rate. The basic rate of income tax is currently 25%.

Halifax Building Societies

Study backs new job count

BY PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

THE Government should introduce a new survey-based measure of unemployment each month, in addition to the regular count of jobless claimants, according to a new government study.

The Central Statistical Office (CSO) will publish tomorrow a report on jobless figures commissioned by the CSO from David Steel, an Australian statistician. Details were given yesterday to the Commons' Employment Select Committee.

Dr Steel recommends a monthly version of the current Labour Force Survey (LFS), an internationally accepted measure of unemployment. Every three months it collects labour market data from 60,000 households. To save on costs, Dr Steel proposes collecting the full LFS data from only a third of the sample each month. Some ministers are sceptical, but may be swayed by the prospect of more accurate charting.

The cost of a monthly LFS could rise to about £14 million annually from between £5 million and £6 million at present.

Ministers hope that new claimant count unemployment figures, to be released today, will show a further fall.

Back to work, page 29

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BP res pump

DESTINAT

Waning popularity of Instants Barings investors take threefold aim Desperate paradoxes for the French economy

Scratch fails to relieve the itch

YOU CAN see them in their down-at-heel thousands at newsagents in dingy shopping malls or convenience stores on run-down housing estates, the walking wounded of the welfare state, queuing for their instant, ill-lusory fix of hope.

For the scratchcard pumper, the chances of a big, life-transforming win are only marginally better than of marrying Anthea Turner. The odds on a small win are rather better, but only if you define a win, as the National Lottery does, as getting your money back.

Now the signs are that some of the sheep are no longer willing to be shepherded to market. Sales of scratchcards have been sliding for months and are now well below £20 million a week and probably anchored there.

Camelot, the lottery operator, has overreacted with a rush to produce a range of products to support flagging card sales. As a result, the public is baffled by all the new games on offer, and turned off by the decision to limit some prizes while holding the initial stake money at a pound.

There is also the threat of rival schemes, some of which pay money direct to charities rather than routing it all through the cumbersome Lottery mechanism. Scratchcards are like any new and unexpectedly profitable market, whether in gambling or

alcoholic lemonade. More opportunists than the trade can support will always be dragged in until a process of Darwinian selection strips out the non-performers from the survivors.

There is something especially pernicious about Instants scratchcards, though. The product, and its yobbish advertising, is carefully aimed at what are politely known as the C2s and Ds, that section of society least able to afford gambling and least intellectually capable of appreciating the awful length of the odds against winning.

But it is the form of this particular fix that is most disturbing. Failure demands another try, and the instant nature of the scratchcard allows one. Millions may lose every week on the on-line lottery, but the delay between placing the bet and learning of the loss limits the amount wagered. Some gamblers may go in too heavily, but for most families it has become a comfortable weekly ritual.

By contrast, most retailers can tell stories of compulsives who spend far more than they can afford on scratchcards, and come

back every week. Camelot is now considering the results of a pilot scheme running since October that has put the on-line lottery and the cards into a selection of pubs. This misbegotten scheme seems to have attracted little public criticism, so an extension looks likely.

The extraordinary success of the lottery, and the strong performance for on-line sales even on weeks without a rollover, suggest that the fall-off in scratch cards will not harm the fortunes of Camelot and its members. But that decline, although it may be too little and too late, is to be welcomed nonetheless.

Tied up in legal bonds

IT IS a mere coincidence that sees two books on Nick Leeson appear just as aggrieved bondholders in Barings are launching fresh legal action against the bank, but it is an unhappy coincidence all the same.

Revelations like those in The Times on Monday, that some £80 million or more of the bonuses



paid to Barings managers and executives were based entirely on non-existent "profits" booked by the energetic if misguided Leeson, can only fan the flames. The re-emergence of the Leeson visage, with or without reversed baseball hat, on the front pages will do little for the bondholders' blood pressure.

ING, the Dutch purchasers of Barings, must have known all along that the numbers those bonuses were based on were phoney, but they presumably felt payment was a necessary part of the total bill for buying the bank. It does not take a financial genius, or even the Bank of England, to realise there was going to be something dubious about Barings' 1994 accounts.

The bondholders have, ostensibly, three sets of targets. They want to sue the three main executives at Barings, the three City institutions who managed the bond issue, and they will also have a go at the two Barings companies now in administration, to lever themselves up the list of priority creditors.

They are looking for £109 million plus costs. In the above order, the three executives do not have £109 million. ABN Amro Hoare Govett, BZW and Cazenove do, but so unexpected and shocking was the collapse of Barings that it hardly seems reasonable to expect them to have foreseen it when putting together the prospectus for the issue in January 1994. They can be expected to put up a strong defence. Barings plc and Barings Brothers are bust, so there is no money there either.

The bondholders' true target is ING. The hope must be that the Dutch, wearying of the endless bickering, will come up with a few million of "nuisance money" to add to the hundreds of millions ING has already spent on Barings. The Dutch might,

and put some money the way of the preference shareholders as well. But their legal obligation to find the cash looks doubtful.

What cost the franc fort?

QUELLE horreur, quelle confusion. Who would be a Frenchman, trying to make sense of his country's economic predicament? Denis Kessler, head of the French equivalent of our Confederation of British Industry, tied himself in knots yesterday in an attempt at a rational analysis.

Constant announcements of new tax increases destabilise households and companies. Measures to boost economic growth have undermined confidence. He wants state-directed growth financed with debt — but means about the budget deficit. Production is stagnating, unemployment is rising, pay is too high, investment is too low.

Emerging from this bouillabaisse of complaints, however, is one certainty. However dire the economy, the franc must not be

allowed to depreciate. Only a rapid move towards a single currency will provide conditions for lasting growth, he says.

Imagine Britain were still in the exchange-rate mechanism. The recession is deepening, unemployment and repossessions are soaring — and the CBI begs the Chancellor, nay, prays for a thumping great rise in interest rates. Only thus do you have a measure of the strange sickness that seems to have overtaken the French psyche.

M Kessler's outpourings could not have been in greater contrast to those from across the border. Hans-Olaf Henkel, his German equivalent, said his members would not support a single currency unless it could be proved to promote stability. Perhaps Herr Henkel can offer M Kessler some free counselling.

Tangled cables

BICC is well ahead of the field for this year's Bad Timing award after announcing an £11 million expansion for its Singaporean cables business just as a local subsidiary was being barred from public contracts after bribery allegations. A couple of years ago, BICC had the misfortune of becoming tangled up in the scandal over the Pergau dam, in neighbouring Malaysia. As Lady Bracknell might have put it....

Apple puts dividend payments on ice

FROM RICHARD THOMSON IN NEW YORK

APPLE Computer, the world's second largest desktop computer company, has suspended dividend payments because of mounting losses.

The move underlines the depth of the problems besetting Apple, which has suffered a series of big setbacks over the past few months.

Apple reported a \$69 million loss in its first financial quarter and last week gave a warning that losses in the second quarter would be even bigger as it pays the price of strategic errors that have left it isolated, with a shrinking market share and a devastated workforce.

Gil Amelio, who took over as chairman and chief executive after a boardroom shake-up two weeks ago, is struggling to put together a new strategy to restore public confidence in the company while keeping it independent.

The dividend decision was well received in the stock market. The shares rose 50 cents in early trading to \$28.875.

The company said yesterday that profit margins would remain under pressure and be below the level of previous years because of intense pricing pressures. Apple blamed increased competition, compressed product life cycles and the need to reduce costs.

Apple has been forced to discount its desktop computers heavily to protect its market share. It has looked hard for a merger partner, but negotiations with Sun Microsystems were aborted.

CIACORN Computer Group, the UK computer technology company that is majority-owned by Italy's Olivetti computer group, and Apple Computer UK are forming a £5 million joint venture company to develop IT solutions for the UK education market.



Sir David Simon, left, BP's chairman, and John Browne, chief executive, after announcing record profits yesterday

BP results set record but pump wars hurt growth

BY CARL MORTIMER

PRICE competition at the petrol pump is keeping a check on profits growth at British Petroleum. Yesterday, the oil company reported its largest annual profit of £2 billion for 1995, compared with £1.48 billion in 1994, but weak refining margins and price wars at the pump caused a sharp fall in profits from downstream activities.

BP's 36 per cent advance in replacement-cost profit comes before a £709 million charge in the fourth quarter for restructuring its worldwide refining operations. Last autumn, BP agreed to sell a refinery in Ohio, and in January the oil company announced the closure or sale of another three refineries, in the

US, France and The Netherlands. The company also gave warning of a softening in the chemicals markets.

Sir David Simon, chairman of BP, admitted the trading outlook for refining was grim, with margins at their lowest for 10 years. "There is still overcapacity and that is almost certain to affect margins," Sir David said. BP intended to remain competitive on petrol prices.

BP is raising the final quarter dividend by 4p to 4.25p, a total of 15.25p, up 45 per cent on 1994. Sir David said the profit rise in 1995 was achieved by a combination of self-help and volume increases, claiming the oil company had achieved \$2 billion

of performance improvements ahead of schedule. "I think we are back at the upper end of the oil premier league," he said. "The companies that can show productivity gains are the real players."

BP has had discussions with British Gas over take-or-pay contracts but does not expect an early resolution of the problem. The oil company supplies BG with 600 million cubic feet a day but John Browne, chief executive, said that the average cost of the BP contracts was 16p per therm, compared with BG's average cost of some 20p.

Profits from oil exploration and production rose to £579 million in the fourth quarter, from £522 million in the same

period of 1994, thanks to lower exploration write-offs and in spite of a static oil price of \$17 per barrel. BP expects the oil price to remain within a \$16-\$18 range but gave a warning of uncertainty in the supply/demand balance.

The chemicals division suffered a downturn in the fourth quarter owing to destocking by customers, with profits sliding from £225 million to £127 million. Profits for the year were a record £854 million because of stronger margins and lower costs. In the near term, BP expects softer margins but hopes profits will pick up later in the year.

Profits from oil exploration and production rose to £579 million in the fourth quarter, from £522 million in the same

Profits at BOC fuel worries in City

BY ALASDAIR MURRAY

BOC left the City mildly disappointed yesterday in spite of increased first quarter profits of £101 million.

The chemicals company's share price dropped 18p to 925p with the results registering at the low end of expectations. There was also some concern that a fall in US demand for liquid products in December signalled the start of a downturn in its vital US markets.

But Danny Rosenkrantz, chief executive, said: "The improvement was in line with our expectations and shows pretty strong growth across all our main markets, except in healthcare, which we expected to be flatish."

Overall, turnover rose 11 per cent to £968 million. The gas division turnover rose 9 per cent to £681 million, while profits rose to £94 million. BOC said demand had remained strong in the US throughout the quarter, with profitability on an upward trend, although the pace of increase had slowed. Sales and profits increased in Europe, the Pacific and South Africa.

Profits in Ohmeda, the healthcare division, fell by 10 per cent to £13.5 million on reduced turnover of £116 million, as the company continued to be hit by generic competitors to its forane anaesthetic, although it had preserved its market share at about 50 per cent. Suprane, a new anaesthetic, improved its market share to around one third.

The vacuum products and distribution services business continued its upward trend with turnover up 38 per cent to £171 million and profits up to £18 million.

Tempus, page 28

Safeway trading fails to impress

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

CHRISTMAS trading figures from Safeway failed to cheer the market yesterday. Shares in Argill, the parent company, were marked down, and some brokers trimmed forecasts, in spite of a like-for-like rise in sales of 3.6 per cent in the 17 weeks to the end of last week.

City concern focused on a dip in gross margin. This margin — which is in the mid 20s — slipped by 0.4 percentage points, the group said, as competitive pricing in the sector bit hard.

A Safeway spokesman also said that the current round of traditional new year price discounting was proving sharper than in recent years.

The group also disclosed that sales early last month had slowed. However, it said that sales were currently more pleasing.

Safeway is rolling out a strategy to stem the erosion of its gross margin, which will

include promotion of its own brands, a greater emphasis on high-ticket non-food items, such as children's clothes, and a greater contribution from technology. The group is planning more use of self-scanning, now on trial in several stores. It says that scanners that enable customers to add up their own baskets and pass through special check-outs speed shopping.

Safeway says that non-food items such as videos and stationery have buoyed the group against fresh food and other perishables, which sell at punishing margins. The chain has also increased sales per square foot by varying its mix. This, it said, had shown room for improvement.

The group is still pursuing its expansion programme and plans to open 17 stores this year and 17 next year.

Tempus, page 28

Improved lending volumes help lift AIB

BY PATRICIA TEHAN, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

ALLIED IRISH BANKS, Ireland's largest bank, lifted pre-tax profits by 9 per cent, to 1r£373 million, in 1995. Tom Mulcahy, chief executive, said that the increase was achieved in "a highly competitive environment" because of improved lending volumes and improvement in credit quality.

Neil Dean, chief financial officer, said that the bank had had a particularly good year in Northern Ireland, where lending through the branches was 25 per cent up on 1994, and overall lending was 15 per cent higher. Growth had come "not so much from the peace dividend" as from benefits of putting AIB technology into TSB branches bought in 1991.

Mr Dean said resurgence in

Northern Ireland's economy predated the peace process. He said it was too soon to predict effects of Friday's bomb, but added: "We were growing a solid business prior to the ceasefire. We are confident that we can continue that in most of our businesses."

AIB Bank, which includes retail and commercial operations in the Irish Republic, Northern Ireland, Great Britain, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man, increased profits by 10 per cent, to 1r£203.9 million. US profits were steady at 1r£109.6 million, up from 1r£109.5 million.

The year's dividend is 17 per cent up, at 1r£2.9p; the final dividend, of 1r£7.7p, up 20 per cent, is payable on May 2.

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THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Tales of a Vienna youth

DADDY, what did you do on your way to the top? Tim Melville-Ross charmed guests with tales of his misadventures at yesterday's launch of Fulcrum, a new overseas work experience programme for A-level students, sponsored by the Institute of Directors and British Airways. On his way to becoming Director-General of the IoD, Uppingham-educated Melville-Ross worked in a Viennese chocolate factory. "I led a double life, and was completely schizophrenic. I'd rush out at the end of the day smelling of chocolate to meet my rather smart girl friend at the opera," he boasted.

Sir Colin Marshall's childhood memories were rather less exciting. "There was nothing like 'shadowing' people for experience in my day because, of course, I grew up during the war," explained BA's chairman.

But can anybody bear the work experience of China's Foreign Trade Minister, Wu Yi, now visiting Britain? She did extended stints as a bulldozer driver, tried her hand as an explosives operative, and was an oil rigger before becoming Peking's deputy mayor in 1986.

Down — then out
IT IS a sad day for those used to dashing into Debenhams in Oxford Street, skipping down the escalator, and arriving breathless in Midland Bank's Share Shop. The bank, which opened its first Share Shop in Birmingham in 1989 and two years later bought Debenhams Investment Services, which expanded its shop network to 70, is closing the Oxford Street outlet in May. It started life at Debenhams on the third floor. However, in recent years the Share Shop has been moved down to the basement. Midland says the decision is a reflection on Debenhams, it is just that business has dwindled. Would-be customers will be asked to dash across the road to 431 Oxford Street, or trip along to Baker Street, or indeed to any of Midland's other 200 share shops.



"Now that's what I call a Valentine"

All heart

MEANWHILE, Midland Bank is giving a Valentine's Day gift to the villagers of Bruton, Somerset (population 3,500). After a hard-fought campaign to get a banking facility in Bruton after the closure of NatWest's branch last year, Midland has agreed to take over the NatWest premises and opens a branch there today.

Months of babes

IF YOU have ever been flummoxed by an idiotic guide to a new personal computer, there is a solution. At yesterday's launch of the Department of Trade and Industry's Information Society Initiative, Ian Taylor, Minister for Science and Technology, recalled being told in a light-hearted vein that instead of PC companies offering a manual with their new product they should send a five-year-old instead.

COLIN CAMPBELL

Shepherd bangs the drum overseas for jobs in UK

Philip Bassett on a government drive to highlight Britain's labour market performance

Gillian Shepherd, the Education and Employment Secretary, flies to Paris tomorrow, armed with today's latest unemployment figures, which ministers hope will show a further fall, to sell what she regards as the success story of the UK labour market — one vital to Britain's overall economic competitiveness.

She will be putting to the French equivalent of the CBI details of the UK's labour market performance, which she published this week. She will also be sending them to Patrick Flynn, the EU's Social Affairs Commissioner, and a range of countries considering making new inward investments in Britain.

To all of them, her message will be the same. "Britain — all of Britain — is getting back to work. We have growing numbers of successful companies, and rising numbers of people in work." However, she accepts too that at 2.24 million — officials think that it could fall today by 10,000-15,000 below that — unemployment remains "too high".

Her move comes as Brussels is making it clear that it will seek from the UK the abandonment of its opt-out from the Maastricht treaty's social chapter during the process of the intergovernmental conferences that start this summer. But the Government is determined not to let the opt-out go, and the new campaign on Britain's comparative jobs performance is part of its case for retaining it — a case likely to be rehearsed at the EU's first social policy forum in Brussels next month and at the forthcoming G7 jobs conference in London.

Labour is scathing about the Government's claims, the key elements of which are laid out in the accompanying table. Using OECD figures, Michael Mescher, Labour's employment spokesman, says that far from Britain outperforming its principal competitor countries on jobs, looking at the period from 1979 when the Conservatives came to power, the UK heads the relatively small list of wealthy countries where jobs have fallen, with the 0.1 per cent decline in civilian employment contrasting sharply with the 36 per cent rise in jobs in The Netherlands, or the 31 per cent increase in Germany.

Mrs Shepherd may soon have even more figures to add to those released this week on jobs. Tomorrow, the Central Statistical Office (CSO) will start consulting on a proposal to add a monthly survey-based measure of unemployment to the regular count of the number of people out of work and claiming benefit. Details of its report were given yesterday to the all-party Commons Employment Select Committee with the clear recommendation for a new unemployment count. The Government's claims on the UK's jobs performance are supported by a study on jobs across Europe from the Institute of Directors. The IoD suggests that in the 20 years to 1994, no net



Gillian Shepherd's message is that Britain is getting back to work

private-sector jobs were created in Europe — while the deregulated US saw a growth of as many as 30 million such jobs over the same period.

"Others are less fully persuaded. In a new report on employment across Europe, Income Data Services says that while the jobless rate in Britain has declined, "UK performance on employment creation is less convincing", with the creation of low-paid, part-time and precarious jobs, together

with increased job security, depressing consumer demand and leading to lower economic performance.

Mrs Shepherd sees her department's move both as being couched in the framework of competitiveness promoted by Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, and as an important step in the re-engineering of government being enacted by merging the employment and education departments. Formally, the new department's business-style mission state-

ment is within that framework: its primary aim is to "support economic growth and improve the nation's competitiveness and quality of life by raising standards of educational achievement and skill and by promoting an efficient and flexible labour market".

Officially, the line from the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) is that both "E's have equal weight. But with unemployment still falling and education a vital issue, the political advantage to be gained from a concentration on educational issues is clear. "Clearly, in terms of day-to-day detail, it may have this emphasis," Mrs Shepherd told *The Times* when questioned about the apparent stress on education. "But it does not remove in any way from my contention that education and training and higher education are important because of their contribution to the improved competitiveness of the economy. I am absolutely convinced of that."

Officials from Mr Heseltine's competitiveness unit are trading carefully in the dangerous waters of international educational comparisons, in line with Mrs Shepherd's job comparisons. Such boldness in politically sensitive areas has proved the undoing of some of her predecessors at both Education and Employment. But Mrs Shepherd is highly thought of by Downing Street, and is seen by some as a potential successor if necessary to John Major.

She acknowledges now that the scrapping of the Employment Department last year and its merger with Education were badly handled. What had been a long-cherished aim of some reformers thrust on the day when e-mail went astray, and staff first heard of the change on the lunchtime news.

Mrs Shepherd rapidly set about reforming the structures of the departments, adopting a business-style organisation that has seen the creation of eight directorates, each led by a director-general, the departure of one of the two "joint" permanent secretaries, and the emergence of Michael Richard as the sole permanent secretary. He says that there were two distinct cultures, two sets of aims, no structure and untrained employees. But he charts the structural reform, the competition between officials for jobs, the sharing of values, and the delaying of senior staff with numbers down from 145 to 95, as clear evidence of progress. He says: "Despite some scepticism, the response has been more positive than I expected."

Mrs Shepherd agrees, even though she occasionally talks of the "two sides" of the department. She is convinced, too, that the merger will be permanent, whatever the outcome of the next election. She is critical of what she calls the "inward-looking" nature of some of the educational establishment — "they don't see themselves as part of the country's economic effort" — and believes the re-engineering of the departments will reinforce to them too the competitive importance of both education and employment.

She fervently believes in the idea of the merger, that it is working, and that it is vital for Britain's economy. "It has just transformed everything," she says. And her trip to Paris to bang the drum for jobs in Britain shows how far the idea of competitiveness is now running in areas previously denied to it.

	UK	Germany	France	Italy	Spain
% Unemployment	8.6	8.6	11.6	12.8	22.2
% Employment	68	66	59	51	45
Inward investment	30*	9	18	9	7
Non-wage labour costs	18**	32	41	44	34

* — Proportion of European Union Total (Other countries = 27)
** — Data could not be obtained for every EU10 in wages

Source: DfEE

ICA's next move should be to elect its presidents

From Mr Jeff Wooller

Sir, It is wonderful news that the proposed merger between the English ICA and CIMA has been shelved.

However, we are concerned when Pennington (February 13) states that: "If the English ICA is to grow, it should do so by competing openly with its rivals."

We are not concerned with growth for the sake of growth. If we wanted that we would not have opposed the merger. What we wish to protect is the quality of our qualification, which we felt was being diluted by the proposed merger.

Promote saving through realistic rates

From P. E. Wood

Sir, Dare I suggest that Messrs Clarke and George have got it badly wrong apropos their attempts to reverse the decline in the economy?

I refer particularly to recent adjustments to the base rate. If it is to be understood that, because of uncertainty, people are saving rather than spending, then, by lowering the base rate and giving financial institutions the incentive to reduce savings rates by even greater percentages to returns below the rate of inflation, it is hardly surprising that, with actual losses on their capital, savers are not in the mood to spend.

Conversely, by increasing rates, these people, who by definition have funds, may be induced to relax a little, while that hitherto favoured species of borrowers, again by definition, are unlikely to change their habits.

What is needed is the

er. The English ICA is still the first choice for the highest quality entrant. Thousands of hopefuls are cast away each year by the highly selective practices of the major accountancy firms. The standard of entry goes up each year. We wish to maintain the quality of input.

We have won a major battle, but the war goes on. We are proposing at the next annual general meeting in June that future presidents are elected by the members.

This would replace the present sycophantic system whereby presidents are chosen by the Council. This

system has failed and we must look for change. Our proposal may not be the best alternative, but at least it is better than the present system and at least it is more democratic.

In American-style elections, potential candidates for president will have to submit a manifesto to all members.

Those proposing mergers are likely to get short shrift. Yours faithfully,

JEFF WOOLLER,
English ICA anti-merger
giggle group,
Capital Barter Corporation,
47-48 Berners Street,
W1.

Risk and reward

From Mr N. D. Anderson
Sir, Mr James Parker seems to consider the high salaries of the senior partners of KPMG justified as a reward for risks taken (Letter, February 9). As the audit function of KPMG is incorporated, I assume the accounts in 1997 will show a marked reduction in the salaries to reflect absence of risk.

On the day that nurses are awarded 2 per cent, Mr Parker's letter seems ill-considered and ill-timed. Yours faithfully,

NORMAN D. ANDERSON,
19 Catterstone Drive,
Dundee.

British Gas's suppliers can win both ways

From Mr Roy Albiston

Sir, Suppliers with take-or-pay contracts with British Gas seem singularly well placed. ("Customers flock to switch gas supplier," February 10).

Presumably they can be paid twice for the same gas — first for what they have not supplied to BG because hav-

ing undersold BG, they have destroyed its market, and then again for the same gas supplied directly to the customer. Poor old Sid.

Yours faithfully,
ROY ALBISTON,
Courlands,
Mayfield Lane,
Wadhurst,
East Sussex.

When faith is not enough

From M. J. Stanley

Sir, If "patronism is the last refuge of the scoundrel", it seems caveat emptor is often the last refuge of the insurance industry.

All who purchased a pension scheme (The responsibility for mis-selling and compensation, Business Letters, K. D. Boyd, February 7) thought they were protecting their future, not gambling their savings. In which case *uberrimae fidei* (utmost faith) seems more appropriate than *caveat emptor*.

Traditionally, the insurance industry has built its business on good faith, hence most general insurance is covered by *uberrimae fidei* contracts. It is high time that the legal position of welfare insurance is clarified if it is to become the successor to the Welfare State.

Yours faithfully,
M. J. STANLEY,
4 The Haven,
Locks Heath,
Southampton.

A case misdirected along Latin lines

From Mr Ralph Instone

Sir, In arguing that losses on mis-sold policies should be borne by the consumer, Mr K. D. Boyd (The responsibility for mis-selling and compensation, Business Letters, February 7) reaches the wrong conclusion by a misuse of Latin. The doctrine *caveat emptor* does not apply to contracts of insurance: *uberrimae fidei* (utmost good faith) does. *Caveat emptor*.

Yours faithfully,
RALPH INSTONE,
18 Faircross,
Roehampton Lane,
Putney SW15.



ANTHONY HARRIS

Dr Doom offers an optimistic storm warning

Are British fund managers, who have sold out of the Wall Street bull market, suffering from collective panic? Yes, said Anatole Kaletsky on February 13. This is a rerating, not a financial bubble, and the bull run will continue. His case was based on the economic fundamentals, and might have looked stronger if he had cited the following authoritative assessment of the US outlook in 1996.

"The near-term prospects still support the pleasant side of volatility. Corporate restructuring and downsizing remain in force, constraining the rate of inflation ... The pronounced winnowing down of defence expenditures will continue to be a dampening force. Financial rehabilitation has been largely accomplished in the US and most of Europe: most banks are healthy and capable of energetically seeking new opportunities ... In comparison with other major industrial countries, the US has better prospects. Unemployment is down, job creation is still positive ... and the Federal Reserve will probably provide additional monetary accommodation. These conditions will support consumption while US business is highly competitive, and can hold on to market share. In this context, financial markets will continue to do reasonably well."

The source of this cheery view? Dr Henry Kaufman, speaking in Milan a couple of weeks back. Dr K. was for many years known on Wall Street as Dr Doom. Has he suddenly turned soft, then? Not if you read the small print. The words above are the short-term prelude to a characteristic Kaufman warning: what goes up will in due course come down. Possibly as soon as 1997.

His reasoning is based not on economic but on financial fundamentals: the argument that modern market developments have made prices more volatile. Derivatives and securitisation create the illusion of endless liquidity, and encourage risk-taking, though exit can be impossible in a panic. Meanwhile, the explosion in US mutual funds and the spread of global trading

have made investment flows bigger and less stable. For the moment all these factors are conspiring to drive the bull market; but when they turn ... "The unpleasant side of volatility" could prove one of the great historic understatements.

A Tokyo-style boom and crash, then? Here I will stick out a mile or so of neck, and disagree with Dr K. What his warning overlooks is that increased short-term volatility can in the longer run make markets more, not less stable. Technophobia dates back at least to the Brady Report on the 1987 market crash — caused, it said, by program trading. But with hindsight we can see that the programs were right: they triggered a manageable correction, which laid the base for the great bull run. The 1994 bond crash, which started in the securitised mortgage market, is the same story of early correction. Small earthquakes, few hurt. And Tokyo gives the negative proof: no modern gadgets to check a runaway bull, three-figure p/e ratios, and then a 1929-style crash.

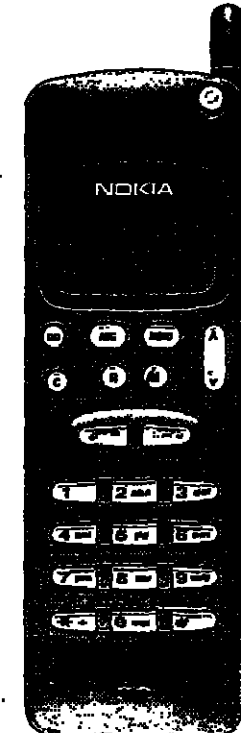
All clear on Wall Street, then? Not in the long run. First, history is against sleeping bulls: huge price increases always do lead to a correction. Secondly, the part of the Kaufman warning which will probably be overlooked, the mutual fund tide. Wall Street has been waiting for a sell-off for so long that it has got bored; but there are other dangers. The more immediate is that paper wealth will again blind US consumers to the risks of excessive borrowing, until the Fed is forced to start tightening. That would lead to a replay of 1994, but probably louder. It could happen in 1997. Further out lurks demography: as today's savers become tomorrow's retired, the flow which has pumped \$1,000 billion into Wall Street since 1987 will slow to a trickle. The British house market shows the power of such reversals; but not for 20 years or so. So are British managers craven fools? That depends on what have they bought instead.

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For a young person aged up to 25 with good typing (60wpm) and a genuine interest in the arts, this is a fantastic job. If you are enthusiastic about working in a creative, dynamic environment, you will be an ideal candidate for a company that is looking for a young, energetic, and motivated individual to join their team. The successful candidate will be responsible for a variety of tasks, including administrative support, and will be expected to work long hours. The company offers a competitive salary and excellent benefits package. Please call now.

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UP TO £21,000 + PENS + MED + STL + INS ++

When you're not working on a one to one basis with the Head of Private Clients, you'll be supporting a colleague, one of the country's most successful private bankers. You'll be working in a very senior team. Other plus points are that you'll be working in a superb office with a fantastic view, and you'll be part of a team that's always on the move. If you have 60+ shorthand, are 25+ years old, and you have an excellent work record, please call now.

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In light and modern offices in St James's, this is a developing and exciting opportunity. The successful candidate will be a 30+ secretary (60wpm) to work in a senior team. The company offers a competitive salary and excellent benefits package. Please call now.

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GO GLOBAL!
PA/EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
£18-£20,000 + Annual Bonus West London

When it comes to being at the forefront of international communications & commerce, our client, a global satellite communications company, is at the very top of the tree. Their pace of business demands they recruit vibrant, motivated individuals to join their team. The company keeps up the momentum with the challenge & beyond! The positions are available on a temporary to permanent basis. The benefits include a personal pension, life insurance, long term disability, medical, dental & personal accident insurance. To apply you should want to stretch yourself & face new challenges & be fully conversant with Microsoft Office. Telecommunications experience would be a definite advantage.

For further information call NICOLA OR KAREN on 0181 741 8080 or fax your CV on 0181 741 9212. 12 Haverstock Broadway, London, W6.

Office Angels

Production Manager

Well-organised, intelligent manager required to word process and arrange print production of all course and publicity materials for this professional training company.

You must have:

- Fast, accurate typing (70wpm), using MS Word on a Mac
- A working knowledge of print production, preferably with Quark XPress
- Hardware and software maintenance and purchase experience, as you will provide computer support to other users
- A flexible, team-oriented and unflappable approach for this often pressurised environment.

Please apply to:
John Cooper, Managing Director, BPP Professional Development
15 Jockey's Fields, London WC1R 4BW

BPP
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

TOY DESIGN CO.

Informal Toy Design company in North Hill Gate requires enthusiastic, outgoing person to help with the general day to day running of the office. You should have a good telephone manner, typing skills (Wordperfect or Ami Pro), and a good knowledge of the toy industry. Experience of working in an office and excellent organisational skills. We are a small, lively, friendly, music loving office. Hours 9am to 5pm.

Contact Fay on 0171 221 4121.

PERSONAL ASSISTANT TO
THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

Worthing Excellent Salary

GRIFFIN Factors is the most profitable factoring company operating in the UK's fastest growing business finance sector. We are a subsidiary of one of the world's largest banking groups, HSBC Holdings/Midland Bank, dealing with the 110 correspondent factoring companies world-wide.

Being PA to the Managing Director at Griffin is all about teamwork. Between you, you'll make sure that the business continues to run smoothly, expand rapidly and constantly improve on its remarkable success.

That's why you'll need to be a true perfectionist. Working closely with the MD, you can expect the level of involvement that means you're always up-to-date and fully informed on absolutely everything - vital, since no two days will ever be the same.

It's an approach that will give you the confidence to deal with anything that comes your way. You'll have the MD's full support right behind you, but you'll need the resilience to enjoy being thrown into any situation and the versatility to always hit the ground running.

Plenty of experience at this level, the initiative to make a real contribution and the confidence to deal intelligently with senior personnel are all essential. A natural organiser with a flair for managing, prioritising and re-structuring an exceptionally busy diary, you'll preferably have financial services experience, too. Your secretarial skills, including 100 wpm shorthand, should be faultless - and ideally you'll also be interested in acting as secretary for various committee meetings.

To apply, please send your full CV and salary details to Jocelyn Ferguson, Head of Personnel, Griffin Factors Limited, Griffin House, 21 Ferncombe Road, Worthing, West Sussex BN11 2BW

GRIFFIN FACTORS
Cashflow for Business
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Prestigious US W1 Consultancy has vacancies in a senior role. Ext. contract with high-profile clients, lots of organising & project work. Adv. Applimac, 25-40yrs. Val Wende Rec Cons 0171 437 3783

SECRETARY/
SALES
ASSISTANT
£14,000

Bond Street gun shop - Super Career opportunity for a well-presented Secretary with some previous Sales experience. Call Jocelyn, St. James's Cons. (0171) 589-1866.

PA FOR INTERNATIONAL PROJECT
DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

Age 25-28 C £26,000 PACKAGE

Experienced, versatile PA is required for this small but high powered international project development company located in Victoria. The position will cover the full range of PA and secretarial duties for two Directors of the company (and other members of the management team as necessary), including creating lengthy and complex documents and presentations, as well as aspects of office administration.

Candidates should have first class word processing and shorthand skills (60/100) with good Word 6 experience, be computer literate, unflappable under sustained pressure and have the flexibility to work evenings and weekends when necessary.

Please fax letter and full CV indicating how you fulfil the above requirements to Peter Terry, Vanguard Capital, on 0171 730 8211.

CAT

SALES/MARKETING ASSISTANT
PA/SALES ADMINISTRATOR

Both functions will play a support role with head of sales helping a team of field sales and customer services to co-ordinate efficiently.

Aged 25-35, educated to 'A' level standard, you already have some experience in a busy sales environment.

Our products are trend setters and market leaders, are you?

Self motivation, organisation, and enthusiasm are what should describe you best, in return we will provide training, competitive salary and a challenging opportunity in a friendly environment.

To apply, please send your CV + letter + photo (quote ref. CPD159 on CV and envelope) to:

Comercia (UK) Ltd - City Reach,
5 Greenwich View Place,
Millharbour, Isle of Dogs,
London E14 9NN

Comercia

SECRETARY/PA

For busy professional man in very pleasant office in Chelsea. Audio typing 60wpm and Wordperfect essential. Must be able to work on a 1st basis. Non-enrollee. Age 25-40. £18,000 o.n.c. Apply to Byrnes & Co. 1825 Wilton Street, London, SW3 2JL. No Agencies.

MARSEILLES
SECRETARY
TO £15,000 (negot)

Sales & Marketing team of large hotel in South of France are seeking a bilingual Secretary (French/Italian/English). Min 2 yrs exp. Age open.

The Language Business (Rec Cons)
Tel: 0171-379-3189

SECRETARY required for small business with good prospects. You should have good typing, shorthand, organisational, and communication skills. Salary negotiable. Ring 0171 376 8000.

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FAX:
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Heart and Soul!

Package to £21,000
Age: 23 yrs +

Put your experience to work with a world leader and reap the rewards. First class organisational skills, enthusiasm and a strong sense of team spirit will help secure an exciting job working for a team of international bankers. Excellent secretarial skills, at least 3 years' experience and the confidence to succeed are all essential. Please telephone Gill Turner on 0171-390 7000 for more information.

Crone Corkill
Recruitment Consultants

Moon River, £20-22,000, Immediate Start

Can you see yourself in a fast-paced office in south west London, overlooking the Thames, working for a talented man in a creative environment? He needs another PA to coordinate his increasingly hectic schedule where communication skills are paramount while dealing with the pilot, the chauffeur and clients throughout the world. To qualify for this position you will be a confident, senior secretarial experience and the ability to work alongside your colleague in a frequently frantic environment. Good typing and windows experience essential. If you are immediately available please call Fiona Mackay on 0171 484 4522.

Crone Corkill
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courtesy of Crone Corkill the only agency in London to offer you AIR MILES awards as you temp. In addition to paying top rates for your excellent office skills and experience, you can clock up AIR MILES awards and soon fly off for a well earned holiday. Don't delay, phone us today on 0171-390 7000.

UP TO £10.50 AN HOUR!
Crone Corkill
Temporary Recruitment

Passionate About People!

£18,000 & Bonus

Use your administrative skills in a varied and involving personnel role at this fast growing City firm. Typing will be minimal but essential. You must be a team player, a few of your duties will include liaising with recruitment agencies, setting up interviews, compiling reports and handling the standard documentation. Educated to A-Level you will have a flexible and team spirit approach and proven administrative skills. Age 22-30. Skills: 50wpm typing and WP knowledge. Please call Vanessa Mitchell on 0171-390 7000.

Crone Corkill
Recruitment Consultants

Paper Hearts £20,000 + bens Waterloo

A small, sociable, fast growing company needs your energy, shorthand and organisational skills to support two directors and the sales team. Duties will include coordinating and taking control of hectic schedules, as well as deputising for the PA to the MD. If you want to work in this young, fun environment you will have fast typing, shorthand, WordPerfect 6 for Windows, Excel and good O'levels. Interested? Please call Dorothea de Kock on 0171 484 4512.

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DTP Secretary £20,000 + Bonus Banking Benefits

Top Investment Bank is looking for a DTP Secretary to support a busy, high profile team. 75% of your time will be spent producing high quality presentation material. The remainder of your day will involve diary management, travel arrangements, administrative and client liaison. You will be professional, have high attention to detail, work well as part of a team and enjoy managing your own time. Word for Windows, Excel and any DTP package essential. 30 wpm typing. Age 23 - 35. Please telephone Belinda on 0171-390 7000.

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Are you ready for the responsibility?

Personal Assistant
£17,616 - £20,260 pa inc

Providing a full range of administrative and secretarial services to our Director of Performance Management, you will liaise with a wide range of contacts, often at a senior level, and be the focal point for all enquiries to the Director's office. In addition, through the effective management of a team of secretaries, you will be expected to ensure that the whole of the Directorate receives high quality secretarial support.

You will, of course, need an excellent record of experience as a PA and should be able to demonstrate good multi typing and word processing skills, the ability to establish and develop office systems, the organisational initiative to prioritise your own workload and the professionalism to see with tact and diplomacy. Ideally, you will also have some supervisory experience.

Our offices are conveniently located adjacent to Paddington station and we offer a range of benefits including a smoke-free working environment and the option of job sharing. Ref: RC-37.

For an application form and full job description, please contact: **South Thames Regional Office, 40 Brompton Terrace, London W2 3QR. Tel: 0171-725 2656 (24-hour answering machine). Closing date: 28 February 1996.**

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South Thames
Regional Health Authority

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£23,234,000 Annual Bonus West London

An exciting, responsible role in one of the country's leading law firms. The successful candidate will be responsible for the legal secretary's duties, including the preparation of legal documents, correspondence, and the management of the firm's legal affairs. The successful candidate will be a member of the firm's legal team and will be responsible for the preparation of legal documents, correspondence, and the management of the firm's legal affairs. The successful candidate will be a member of the firm's legal team and will be responsible for the preparation of legal documents, correspondence, and the management of the firm's legal affairs.

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Temporary Recruitment

PARTNER'S SECRETARY

for 2 part time low firm in W1.
Age 25-35, W4W 5.1 and 6.1. Legal exp req.
£18,500 neg.

No agencies.
Tel: 637 3071, or fax CV on 637 5516.

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MULTI-LINGUAL OPPORTUNITIES

SWEDISH £19,000 An exciting role in a multi-national company. The successful candidate will be responsible for the preparation of legal documents, correspondence, and the management of the firm's legal affairs. The successful candidate will be a member of the firm's legal team and will be responsible for the preparation of legal documents, correspondence, and the management of the firm's legal affairs.

ADMINISTRATOR/Secretary £19,000 An exciting role in a multi-national company. The successful candidate will be responsible for the preparation of legal documents, correspondence, and the management of the firm's legal affairs. The successful candidate will be a member of the firm's legal team and will be responsible for the preparation of legal documents, correspondence, and the management of the firm's legal affairs.

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We have a special prestige law firm, seeking experienced legal secretaries to fill expensive vacant positions. Minimum requirements are three years legal experience and Windows. We offer a competitive salary, excellent benefits, and a career opportunity. Company Law - W1 - Equity Partner - £21,000 + PRP. Property PA - W1/SW7 - £20,000 + PRP. Litigation - Head of Department - £20,800 + PRP. If you would like a further information on these, or any other current vacancies, please call 0171 484 4512 or CHRISTINE COATES in the strictest confidence on 0171 405 2339 LWP Rec Cons.

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We have an opportunity not to be missed for a professional, go-ahead PA working for the MD & CFO of Thomson Financial Services - Europe. TFS provides financial information to the global markets and is part of a highly successful \$6-billion international corporation.

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Excellent secretarial skills (typing/shorthand 80/100wpm) and PC literacy are also vital. If you have the drive, energy and commitment to be the best, this is the right move for you.

We offer an attractive salary and benefits package, plus the opportunity to join a fast moving and truly entrepreneurial business. To apply please send a copy of your CV with covering letter detailing why you are the right candidate for this post and your current salary to: Alex Kennedy, Human Resources, Thomson Financial Services, Aldgate House, 33 Aldgate High Street, EC3N 1DL. Closing date: 21/2/96.

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HERITAGE

A flood of good ideas to bring life back to the Thames — but all depends on John Gummer



MUSIC 1

Rachmaninov's music tests the conducting craft of the young Russian Mikhail Pletnev

THE TIMES ARTS



MUSIC 2

... while at the Barbican Myung-Whun Chung powers the LSO through a Czech night



TOMORROW

How is Paul McCartney's new 'Fame' school doing? We sit in on lessons at the Liverpool Institute

Making more of the Thames is a priority for the millennium. But which schemes are feasible? Marcus Binney reports

How to revive London's river

You hear the call on every side. London's great millennium project must be the revival of the River Thames. There is a frenzy of projects for building new bridges and new Thames landmarks, as well as reviving old ones. Some of the biggest names in British architecture are involved. The question is: will anything be done? It all depends on one man:

John Gummer, the Secretary of State for the Environment, who, wearing his hat as Minister for London, wants to take all the decisions himself. Gummer holds sway by virtue of his power to "call in" planning applications, announce inquiries and decide the outcome — accepting or rejecting his inspectors' recommendations as he sees fit. He has forced everyone, first

by approving a hotly disputed proposal by Sir Richard Rogers to build a multi-storey apartment block beside Battersea Old Church, thereby alienating en bloc Conservative voters across the river in Chelsea. Then, days later, he announced an inquiry into the proposed Tower Bridge Opera House (which no one had objected to), killing off the project just as Credit Lyonnais had found a private investor to finance it.

In the giddy Eighties, developers accepted inquiries as a matter of course. Today people simply back away. The Royal Opera House reckoned it would add a minimum of a year and £100,000 to the bill.

Almost all current Thames projects are potentially contentious and candidates for ministerial intervention. For example, the architect Will Alsop has a daring plan to move the ICA from the Mall to a gallery constructed on the columns of old Blackfriars railway bridge. Beside it, he proposes a glass canopy over the modern railway bridge, ingeniously transforming it into a station serving both sides of the river. But the new station, although transparent, could interrupt views of St Paul's Cathedral. Similar objections could be made to all the proposals for elegant pedestrian bridges, such as Richard Horden's ingenious scheme for an inhabited bridge from Bankside to St Paul's, and to Sir Michael Hopkins' ingenious scheme for a cable car across the Thames from Covent Garden to the Festival Hall.

If the whole Thames initiative is not to be hamstringed, we need some smaller projects. One of the best additions to the



Could the Thames in central London once more carry a bustling riverboat trade, as it did when this late 19th-century photograph was taken?

Thames is the Buddhist pagoda built by visiting monks on the Battersea Park promenade. Why not a series of intriguing and colourful landmarks, on this scale? They would be the modern-day equivalent of the towers and follies in 18th-century parks and the arches erected to celebrate coronations. They could be built on temporary licences. If the public liked them, they could stay. Hopkins has another good thought on these lines — for pontoon gardens floating on the river in front of Somerset House and The Temple. If the first was a success, more could be built with bare and café.

Prospect provides some of the most beautiful vistas along the river. Stand in the middle of Albert Bridge and you would hardly know you were in London. Splendid mature trees line both banks until the

Thames curves out of sight. Turn around, and the trees continue on the north side, but not on the south side where there is a dismal cluster of apartment blocks. Build a new embankment wall here, no more than 15 feet or so high, and another stretch of the Thames could be green for centuries to come.

We need to bring the Thames to life at night. Albert and Tower Bridges are superbly lit, but much of the river is dark at night. A few lights shining down on the water from a new pedestrian bridge would give Londoners a glimpse of the tawny fish we never see. And think what a sculptor such as Michael Pye, who designed the new high-masted royal yacht, points out that the narrow arches of old London Bridge acted as a weir, leaving calmer water above and below. "Read Pepsy and you will see that

In previous centuries, there was a fantastic amount to see on the Thames. "Such a forest of masts for miles together that you think all the ships of the universe here assembled," said Tobias Smollett.

The key issue is how to revive the water traffic. "Regular passenger services are not feasible," says David Jeffrey, chief executive of the Port of London Authority. "It is not possible to make the Thames semi-tidal or non-tidal above the Thames Barrier. It would flood London. You would lose all the fish and the wildlife in and on the river." Strong stuff. But others are not so sure.

Malcolm Drummond, author of the visionary plan for a new high-masted royal yacht, points out that the narrow arches of old London Bridge acted as a weir, leaving calmer water above and below. "Read Pepsy and you will see that

most people got out of their boats at London Bridge and let the watermen plunge through, then got in on the other side," he says.

A key question is whether devices such as fish ladders could be used to keep the river alive. "At the moment the tide is too fast for a waterbus service," says Drummond. "Going down to Greenwich on the ebb and returning on the flood does not provide a proper timetable."

In the year 2000 there is the exciting possibility of holding the Lord Mayor's Show on the Thames. The City's livery companies can bring the river to life with pageantry. This year Drummond becomes Prime Minister of the Fishmongers' Company. He says: "Six companies should be racing on the Thames this summer with newly-built cutters — 30ft gigs which can be

converted into ceremonial barges with canopies." Everything depends on reconciling genuine concerns for wildlife with the opportunity to make renewed use of this once great highway. With millennium celebrations in prospect at Greenwich, whether or not the official festival is held there, the Thames could be alive again with boats.

A ride in a waterbus or water taxi should be as much part of a visit to the capital as catching a red double-decker or hailing a black cab. London's river traffic was once as bustling, varied and colourful as that of Venice or Istanbul. The city has a very long way to catch up, but that is all the more reason for starting now.

● A lecture on The Potential of the Thames will be held at 6.30pm tonight in Westminster Central Hall, SW1 (0171-332 3272)



Richard Horden's model for an inhabited bridge to St Paul's: one of several proposed new Thames bridges

CONCERTS: Spirited Prokofiev; Pletnev proves himself; a Janáček Mass

Alive and kicking

BBC SO/Gelmetti
Festival Hall

Prokofiev's Fifth Symphony in B Flat — along with the *Classical*, his best known — was written in a short space of time in the summer of 1944, although some of its material dates back to the previous decade. Much was expected of the composer: victory over Germany was imminent, and the audience that gathered for the premiere in Moscow, in January 1945, was hoping for an unequivocal expression of national pride and optimism. What Prokofiev gave them was certainly uplifting — he himself said that he conceived the work as "glorifying the human spirit". But, being Prokofiev, it was anything but unequivocal.

A convincing performance of the symphony has to catch that characteristic glint of irony: there is nothing strictly comparable to the forced rejoicing of Shostakovich's Fifth, but there needs to be a constant awareness of the tensions simmering beneath the surface.

Gianluigi Gelmetti's performance with the BBC Symphony Orchestra last Thursday

night by and large did justice to the work. There may have been questionable details and occasional untidiness, but the essential spirit of the interpretation was right.

Gelmetti has a way of keeping something in reserve, so that even if one felt slightly shortchanged by the cumulative energies of the first movement as a whole, there was at least a very effective eruption waiting in the final bars.

The Scherzo, too, had a lethal kick in store for the closing moments, and although the articulation of those driving rhythms might have been a touch more incisive, Gelmetti had the sense to let the subterranean savagery reveal itself without too heavy underlining.

The pungent lyricism of the Adagio was satisfactorily captured, and the finale aptly riotous. Earlier, in the first half, Gelmetti seemed to suggest that Webern's *Pasacaglia* could be viewed as a miniature Expressionist tone poem, in a performance that played up its dramatic potential.

It would be idle to pretend that Dvořák's Violin Concerto in A Minor was as great a work as his better known Cello Concerto. Certainly there were moments in the rhapsodic first movement and in the meditative slow movement that failed to hold the attention. But it is good to hear the piece occasionally, and Uto Ughi brought to bear both a secure technique and a fine sense of lyrical fantasy.

BARRY MILLINGTON

Russian on the way up

CBSO/Pletnev
Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Mikhail Pletnev's concert with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra was well timed. Just when the audience in Symphony Hall was wondering where the next brilliant young conductor was coming from, here was a vivid demonstration that such musicians do exist. By the time the present music director's contract expires, in two years' time, Pletnev will be the same age as Sir Simon Rattle is now, and perhaps even capable of carrying on where he leaves off — although in a Russian-orientated direction.

These observations are intended neither as prophecy nor as advocacy. With a few distinguished exceptions, Russian conductors tend to be less convincing outside their national repertoire. While Pletnev the pianist is not limited in this way, Pletnev the conductor has emerged in the last two or three years largely on the strength of his interpretations of Russian music. On this occasion with the CBSO he was conducting Tchaikovsky

and Rachmaninov. But he did prove, in his minimally demonstrative way, that you don't have to be Rattle to bring out the best in the CBSO. There are others of his generation who can do the same.

Where the orchestra did not sound at its best under Pletnev's direction was in those passages in Rachmaninov's Second Symphony which failed in balance. Far too often, perhaps because Pletnev is used to a different kind of string playing, the violins carrying the melodic line were overwhelmed by the wind sections. This was all the more frustrating in that Pletnev is uncommonly persuasive in phrasing romantic melody. It did not seriously detract, on the other hand, from the long-term value of an interpretation so well calculated in structure and so effectively profiled in its climaxes. The small cut in the last movement was unnecessary.

Another exceptional quality in Pletnev is that he is prepared to take on Tchaikovsky's orchestral suites. They are not uniformly inspired, it is true, but where there is so much characteristic Tchaikovsky sound and so much authentic Tchaikovsky melody it is surely worth the occasional conscientious fugue or dainty gavotte to get at the rest. Pletnev's decision to omit the Scherzo from the Suite No 1 in D was not surprising. But it is still an interesting piece even if it is not as attractive as, say, the engagingly romantic Intermezzo or the delightfully playful Miniature March.

GERALD LARNER

Spirited canter through Czech mass

LSO/Chung
Barbican Hall

requisite spirit in a keen blend of voices and orchestra.

The London Symphony Chorus, with Malcolm Hicks as guest chorus master, voiced no inhibitions about getting their tongues around the original text, but the thunderous amplification of the long organ solo near the end was less to be welcomed than Catherine Edwards' virtuosic playing of it. Vocal solos in the work are oddly disproportionate, but the Slovakian soprano Alžběta Danková from the National Theatre in Bratislava, who is

expected at Glyndebourne in 1997, made an impressive British debut with a voice of lyric fullness. She was matched for fervour by the Russian tenor Sergei Larin, while Anne-Marie Owens and Stephen Richardson contributed the shorter mezzo and bass solos to expressive effect.

An edge to the orchestra's string tone was more acceptable in the Mass than in Dvořák's D major Symphony (No 6) which preceded it. Chung drove this forward at a brisk pace, although he seemed content to express only what was obvious on the surface, except in the trio of the scherzo movement where the application of a finer brush disclosed more of the inner detail.

NOEL GOODWIN

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FILMS

Shakespeare the Hollywood way: Kenneth Branagh defends his part in the new *Othello*



VISUAL ART

The inspiration for a thousand tea towels: eccentric tributes to Constable's *The Cornfield*

THE TIMES ARTS



OPERA

Jonathan Miller provides a quizzical kind of staging for Handel's superb *Rodelinda*



POP

A veteran talent returns: Kiki Dee turns in a performance of admirable depth and passion

Away win for Handel fans

OPERA

Rodelinda
Blackheath
Concert Halls

THE main hall was packed to the gunwales for Monday's semi-staged performance of Handel's opera, which must have given the driver of the last train back to town a nasty shock — a platform filled to overflowing suggested a football match that no one had warned him about.

Operagoers are of course better behaved than most football supporters, but only just. The evening started with some aggro from the crowd when the conductor, Nicholas Kraemer, drew attention to the programme and then someone doused the lights. Angry protests from the stands, the lights came up again and we could all follow the text in authentic 18th-century style.

Jonathan Miller's semi-staging was minimalist. The singers in evening dress, all of whom had their roles by heart, sat at a table groaning with bottles of (I trust) mineral water, rose when required to take part in the action and looked on with varying degrees of interest when not. You knew someone was a wrong 'un when he sang an aria with his hands in his pockets.

Rodelinda (1725) comes from one of Handel's great periods, immediately after *Giulio Cesare* and *Tamerlano*. As so often, you spend the first act thinking what a jolly good opera composer he was. Then, in the second and third, he throws aria after aria at you of such prodigious musical invention and dramatic insight that you realise he was beyond doubt one of

the form's founding and ever-presiding geniuses. He was especially good at villains — and there are two here, with sly vocal lines and jagged progressions to show their twisted mental processes.

Inspired by Kraemer's buoyant conducting, the fine cast did the score proud, especially two outstanding counter-tenors from the new generation whose ease of voice production demands that you dub them sopranos who happen to be men. Daniel Taylor sang the Senesino role of Bertarido with astonishing purity of tone and musicianship, and Robin Blaze his faithful squire equally easily.

Catherine Robbin's velvety, crisply defined mezzo was perfect for the wronged Edgipe. Christopher Purves made an appropriately in-your-face baddie as Garibaldo, and Adrian Thompson, while not in steady voice, drew a fine portrait of the usurper Grimoaldo who sees the error of his ways. Sophie Daneman, sang beautifully but seemed a little polite for a lady who has a pair of villains to defy and thinks she has lost her husband not just once, but twice.

RODNEY MILNES

Moor sex and violence



Central figures in "a relationship that produces violence": Desdemona (Irene Jacob), Othello (Laurence Fishburne) and Iago (Kenneth Branagh)

TO the purist, cinematic treatment of any one of Shakespeare's plays may seem like a crime not unlike turning the Globe Theatre into a Disney theme park. But to Kenneth Branagh, who has more or less made a career out of demystifying, rescuing and reinterpreting the works of the Bard for mass consumption, it is what the man himself would have wanted.

If Shakespeare were alive today, Branagh suggests, he would be perched high in the Hollywood Hills, penning his latest script directly for the cinema screen. "He would probably be on the Internet too," Branagh says. And it is true that many of the plays have all the elements of a contemporary blockbuster.

Little wonder, then, that Hollywood producers are jostling to turn out Shakespeare films in unprecedented quantities: currently there are three *Romeo and Juliet* productions, Branagh's own *Hamlet*, two versions of *Richard III* and a Quentin Tarantino adaptation of *Macbeth*. The latter should be a special treat for Shakespeareans.

But Branagh contends that none is more appropriate to cinematic treatment than *Othello*, with its themes of love, murder, jealousy, betrayal and racism. Forget the tragedy tag: its director, Oliver Parker, is now happy to sell *Othello* to audiences on the basis that it is an "erotic thriller".

Branagh, who has produced, directed and acted in screen versions of *Henry V* and *Much Ado About Nothing*, this time confines his contribution solely to performance: he plays the villain Iago with charm-coated malice. He does not balk at the director's description of the latest *Othello* any more than he does at what others might perceive as the bastardisation of the Bard's work.

Kenneth Branagh tells Martyn Palmer why he is happy to star in an *Othello* described by its director as an 'erotic thriller'

"*Othello* is an interesting example of how directly Shakespeare can speak to people," he says. "I don't think anybody needs any qualifications — for having the chance to enjoy the movie — other than having been in love, perhaps, and understanding that with that goes mild or extreme forms of jealousy from time to time."

"It isn't about politics or kings and queens. It is about a very simple triangular domestic relationship that produces domestic violence, something that is with us now and has been for 400 years. Shakespeare seems to have been on to that, and to have had a view on almost every human situation there is."

Branagh believes that Shakespeare on film can speak directly to young minds in a way that dusty school textbooks cannot. "I get letters from teachers and children who say, and I agree with them, that on the page it does not live in the same way. It is only fully alive when it is embodied by actors. It very much lives in performance."

In the new film version *Othello* comes with 60 per cent of the original text cut away and new scenes added: very different from the classic Olivier film, which remained heavily anchored in a stage production. But the new movie remains a period piece, beautifully filmed at the lush locations

of Venice and Bracciano Castle to the north of Rome, but with a contemporary flavour.

The \$11-million production, funded by an American company, only got the green light when Branagh's bankable name was attached to it. But Branagh says that this new *Othello* is very much Parker's vision. He is the son of the former British Rail boss Sir Peter Parker, his brother Nathaniel plays Cassio. The director believes that the tragedy had to be "re-invested with passion and romance".

A first-time feature director who played Iago in repertory six years ago, he admits that he cut down on Shakespeare's text to emphasise what he terms the "thriller" aspect of *Othello*. "Once I decided I was thinking cinematically it was actually quite liberating, because it is a different medium," he says. "You would do it a disservice if you did it with the original text. Shakespeare didn't write it for film and if he had done so he would have written it differently."

"If he was around now I'm sure he would be using visual imagery more. Words were his weapon at the time, but now it's different. I was trying to be true to the spirit of it rather than the specific text."

Branagh agrees that it is the filmmaker's job to re-evaluate classic work. "It must be fuelled by the film-maker's

response to the play," he says. "Oliver's script was full of that on every page. There is a sense of atmosphere and a sense of what he wanted to convey. He knew what he was doing."

"Oliver's film of *Othello* is very much a recording of a theatrical performance. It is much less cinematic than the Orson Welles 1951 film, which was a bit of a trailblazer: irreverent, if you like, in the way it was put together. And Oliver Parker's version of *Othello* does speak directly to an audience on a visceral level. It doesn't bring historical baggage with it. It lives absolutely now."

In America, critical response to the film has been mixed. *The New Yorker* called it "trash", the *Los Angeles Times* said it was "refreshingly unpretentious". But Branagh's performance has received excellent reviews.

"I'd seen the play lots of times and had been in it once before, as Cassio," he says. "It's always good for an actor to play a villain, especially somebody who, by the end, seems devoid of remorse and regret, someone who has developed an intoxicating glee with the idea of manipulating people."

More Branagh Shakespeare is on the way. His own screen version of *Hamlet*, with himself in the lead and a cast that includes John Gielgud, Jack Lemmon, Charlton Heston, Billy Crystal, Gérard Depardieu, Rufus Sewell, Derek Jacobi, Julie Christie and even Ken Dodd (as Yorick) is in production in Britain.

"The greatest straight part ever written," is how Branagh describes the Prince of Denmark. "It would be very hard for me to persuade an actor to do it the way that I'd like, given that it fits into a view of the play which is very particular. So yes, now I'm doing it all over again. How stupid is that?"

● *Othello* will be reviewed tomorrow and opens on Friday

A voice for all seasons

AS TALK turns towards next week's Brit Awards and the paucity of female talent suggested by another uninspiring list of nominees in that category, here was an evening of timely encouragement. Some 30 years after her recording debut and 15 after her last solo chart appearance, one of Britain's most seasoned but, lately, under-celebrated vocalists is back in the running.

Kiki Dee's return to recording and live work is, to say the most of it, understated. Last autumn, the Ticket-Box label released the splendid but almost entirely overlooked *Almost Naked*, an "unplugged" concert album on which she was accompanied only by guitarist Carmelo Luggeri. This show reprised that record, as a healthy Jazz Café turnout of old fans and inquisitive newcomers was treated to almost two hours of versatility that even her chart years only hinted at.

Assured indeed is the performer who, edging back towards the mainstream, feels no obligation to rush into her hits. Dee, elegant in long coat

Kiki Dee
Jazz Café

and winning smile, fashioned the set around unfamiliar songs, some of them of her own composition and all showing an admirable absence of cliché.

See *Me Through*, she told us with typical Yorkshire openness, was "written 'in about five minutes after a date with a bloke I quite fancied. You Won't See Me Crying", another original, eloquently expressed the fragility of a jittered lover's survival instincts. But it was Dee's adaptability that gave the performance such depth. One struggles to think of many other singers who could interpret songs by Jane Siberry, Willie Dixon, the Young Rascals and Smokey Robinson with uniform dexterity. Siberry's irreverent *Misfit* and *Blanca* and Dixon's deep-blues *Spoonful* were unlikely bedfellows, but benefited from Dee's fluid, unhurried approach and Luggeri's equally flexible accompaniment, as did the Rascals' *Good Lovin'* and Robinson's *Ain't That Peculiar*.

With such delicacies in the mixture, the references to several of her own past achievements formed a rich icing. *Don't Go Breaking My Heart* underwent an acoustic deconstruction. *Amoureuse* was once again an exquisite love song and *Loving and Free* helped further to emphasise that the stock of this crafts-woman has long been seriously undervalued.

PAUL SEXTON

Wheeling and able

DANCE

CandoCo
Queen Elizabeth Hall

EACH performance by CandoCo is remarkable: wheels spinning, chairs spiralling like bicycles, people balancing on one leg or one hand. This may sound like a bunch of circus acrobats, but CandoCo actually consists of able-bodied and wheelchair-using dancers.

CandoCo owes its success not just to novelty: its performers are talented and have a repertoire of a calibre conventional companies should seek to emulate. Rather than suffocating creativity, the physical restrictions and wheelchairs seem to have stimulated most choreographers to an inspired inventiveness.

This rule holds firm with the handsome new piece, *You Are Now Entering the State of Love*, shown as part of CandoCo's two sold-out London performances. Lea Parkinson, one of the company's male dancers, has devised an imaginative duet for Sue Smith and David Toole. The piece begins with images of the heavens, the sea and the remarkably broad hands which — for those familiar with CandoCo — belong unmistakably to Toole. When John Henderson's sensitive lighting plot brightens the stage, Toole's singular

shape becomes evident, offering the illusion of being half sunk into the stage because he has no lower limbs. His long, powerful arms sweep sideways with the dramatic breadth of an eagle's wingspan, enabling him to walk, twist and balance in extraordinary feats of virtuosity.

Lea Parkinson partnered the wheelchair-dancer Celeste Dandeker in *Darshan Singh Bhuller's Once Upon a Time in England* and most of the company assembled for their popular energiser, *Back to Front With Side Shows* by Emilyn Claid.

In this scheme, Toole is the centre, with his vivid, significant glances and blazing physical prowess. The muscular effort, though, has taken its toll and he is retiring to start a film career. With so many pieces tailored to his unique abilities, his departure will leave CandoCo with a gaping hole in its repertoire.

NADINE MEISNER

‘This version speaks to an audience on a visceral level’

Call of the Cam

THE TIMES THEATRE CLUB

to the Corn Exchange for English Touring Opera's production of Massenet's romantic tragedy, *Werther*. After breakfast on Saturday morning there is a visit — by punt! — to the picturesque village of Grantchester, setting for Rupert Brooke's famous poem *The Old Vicarage* (now home to Lord Archer). Near to the Old Vicarage are the incomparable Orchard Tea Gardens, where Stephen Medcalf, ETO's director of productions, will join you to give a talk about Saturday evening's opera, Verdi's magnificent *Rigoletto*. The weekend finishes after breakfast on Sunday.

The all-inclusive price of £192 per person includes best seats for both operas with complimentary programme and a glass of wine in the interval, and two nights' dinner, bed and breakfast. To book, telephone 01223 351241

HOW TO BOOK — AND JOIN

TO BOOK, please phone the listed number during normal office hours. The price printed on the ticket you receive will be the special price negotiated by the Theatre Club. There may be a transaction charge to cover postage.

TO JOIN the Theatre Club either send a cheque for £12.50, made payable to The Theatre Club, together with your name, address and telephone number to The Theatre Club, P.O. Box 2164, Colchester CO2 8JL, or telephone 01206 791737 using your credit card. For general inquiries call 0171 387 0673

THIS WEEK'S OTHER OFFERS

LONDON

Criterion Theatre
March 5-17

● AFTER a sell-out world tour, the Reduced Shakespeare Company returns with *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)*. All 37 of Shakespeare's plays are presented in just 97 minutes, including *Titus Andronicus* as a galloping gourmet and a rap *Othello*. Best available seats £15 (normally £20) for any performance except Saturday evenings. Tel 0171-369 1747

SOUTH SHIELDS

The Customs House
Feb 20, 21

● TWO tickets for the price of one (normally £7.50 to £9.50) for the gripping horror story, *The Woman in Black*. Tel 0191-454 1234

BRIGHTON

Theatre Royal
Feb 21

● TWO tickets for the price of one (normally £12.50) for John Godber's comedy, *Lucky Sods*. Tel 01273 328-888

EDINBURGH

Traverse Theatre
Feb 28

● TWO tickets for the price of one (normally £7) to *The Architect*, David Greig's cut-

ting portrait of one man and his dysfunctional family. Tel 0131-228 1404

CHELTENHAM

Everyman Theatre
Feb 19-24

● TWO tickets for the price of one (normally £4.50 to £13.50) to see the adaptation of Stephen King's psychological thriller, *Misery*. Tel 01323 413000

PLYMOUTH

Pavilion Theatre
Feb 26, 27

● TWO tickets for the price of one (normally £7) to Nick Discombe's bitter-sweet *Halfway to Paradise*. Tel 01752 229922

LEATHERHEAD

Theatrical Theatre
Feb 28, 29; Mar 1, 4-6

● SAVE £3 on top-price tickets (normally £16) for Feydeau's wickedly funny play, *Emily Needs Attention*, starring Felicity Kendal. Tel 01572 37677

BOLTON

Octagon Theatre
Mar 9, 15, 22

● TWO tickets for the price of one (normally £3.75 to £12.50) for Arthur Miller's powerful drama, *A View From the Bridge*. Tel 04204 520661

A new exhibition celebrates the enduring appeal of a Constable landscape

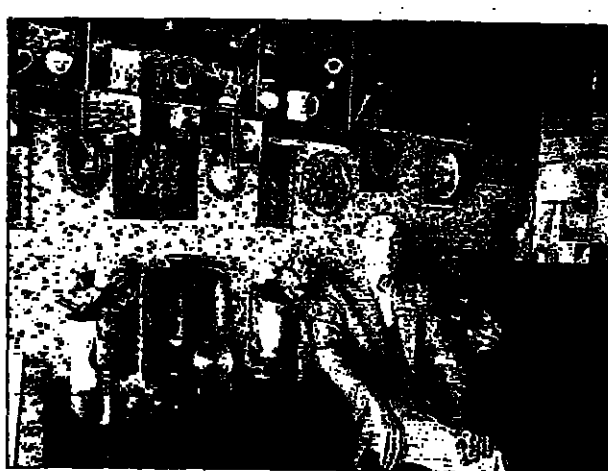
When John Constable wrote, in a letter to a friend dated April 8, 1826, "I do hope to sell this present picture — as it has certainly got a little more eye-salve than I usually descend to give them," he set *The Cornfield* on its journey through history. And it is the journey, as much as the picture, that is celebrated in a fascinating exhibition at the National Gallery from today.

At *Home with Constable's Cornfield* features not only the original, which has been at the Gallery since 1837, but a selection of reproductions, plates, tea-trays, clocks, cushions, trinkets and biscuit tins, onto which the image has found its way in the last 170 years. With each item there is a photograph of its owner, and a statement about their relationship with the object, and the image on it.

The curator Colin Painter, of the Wimbledon School of Art, came upon the idea for the exhibition while working on his PhD thesis in Newcastle in the early 1980s. "I was going into all sorts of houses and taking photographs," he says, "and the only area of decorative commonality across all social groups and incomes, was Constable."

"A lot of people are angry about contemporary art, and this exhibition is partly about ways in which art could find

Fertile field



Jim Nippres: fears for the future of the countryside

its way into people's homes more. *The Cornfield* is very suitable because of characteristics that make it particularly appealing: the countryside, the peace and tranquillity — things we have lost, that make the picture 'relevant' in an environmental sense."

This point is echoed by Mrs Elizabeth Pett, whose fire-screen is one of Professor Painter's favourite exhibits. She was one of 500 people who responded to a notice placed next to the painting in the National Gallery which re-

quested the loan of related objects from members of the public.

"I am 60 now, and when I was young there was a lot of countryside around London. The picture reminds me of a walk I used to take on Sundays just after the war, from Sidcup to Chislehurst. The lane even turned the same way as in the picture, but it has all been built up now."

"It has been my favourite picture since my mother gave me a birthday card with it on as a teenager. I saw the

original for the first time last February and thought it rather orange, much more like a copy my husband once bought me than the fire-screen."

For retired handyman Jim Nippres, who lives on the fourteenth floor of a tower block near Heathrow, and has a reproduction, it is the dog that is important. He is not allowed to have one. But he does have urban angst about the countryside. "Youngsters today will never see things like that picture. It'll all be taken up with concrete buildings and roads."

Another exhibitor, Andrew Smith, had it on the landing at home as a child, and his brother claimed to be the boy in the picture. Andrew wanted it to be him — and found as he grew up that he always measured himself in terms of the drinking boy.

Professor Painter insists that "when they talk about the picture, they talk about their lives". He complains that, "I say 'I like *The Cornfield*' because it reminds me of Suffolk" is not considered a relevant way to talk about art. "It may, however, be a way to make art more relevant."

GILES COREN

● At *Home with Constable's Cornfield* is at the National Gallery, Trafalgar Square, London, W2 (0171-559 3321) until April 21

Irish raider can confirm Champion Chase favouritism

Sound Man to hit right note

By ROBERT WRIGHT

ON Saturday at Newbury Viking Flagship served notice that he is ready to defend his Champion Chase crown. Today at Ascot the young pretender, Sound Man, attempts to confirm his position as favourite to take over the title.

Sound Man has not run since impressively winning the Tingle Creek Chase at Sandown in December and his trainer, Edward O'Grady, is using today's contest to sharpen up his eight-year-old to the Champion Chase.

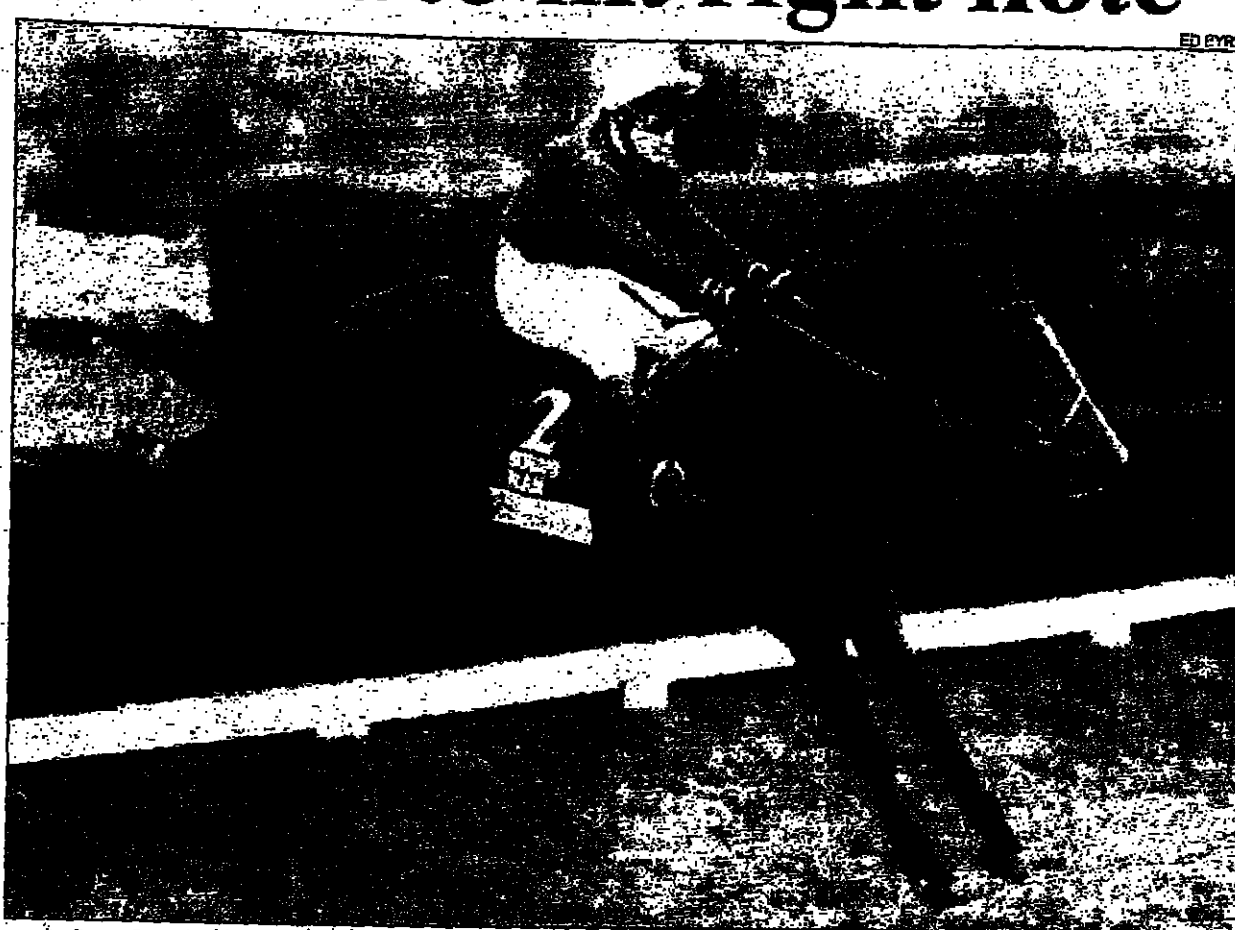
O'Grady said yesterday: "It hasn't been easy with the bad weather recently, but I can't grumble too much because it's been the same for everybody. However, the others have had races more recently than Sound Man and they might have a fitness advantage."

"He won't be at concert pitch because Cheltenham is the target, but I certainly believe he will give a good account of himself."

With Storm Alert best over two miles, the main danger to the Irish raider should be the poulton, who reverts to his optimum trip after failing to win in the King George. However, Sound Man has gone from strength to strength this season, winning all four parts, and it will be a major surprise if he is beaten.

While Sound Man will start prohibitive odds, the other two televised races are more open. The Sheny Enterprises hurdle is fascinating, in spite of only six horses racing from the handicap proper.

Buckhouse Boy and Angel's Double are the informers, but are both 9/10 out of the handicap and have yet to prove that they stay three



Sound Man, winning the Tingle Creek at Sandown, returns to Britain for today's Comet Chase at Ascot

miles. The latter shapes as though this trip will suit and is sure to go well.

Hebridean returns to his last two starts over fences, while Simpson, Seeking Cash, Bala-sani and Top Spin have been below their best recently.

Sound Man's stable companion, Time For A Run, has failed to take to fences this season, and will appreciate the return to the smaller obsta-

cles. He put up a tremendous performance when a third under top weight in last year's Coral Cup at the Cheltenham Festival, and a repeat of that effort would give O'Grady and Dunwoody a valuable double.

The Reynoldstown Novices' Chase has attracted a top quality field and will have a major bearing on the Sun Alliance Chase at the Festival: St Mellion Fairway has been entered for the Gold Cup by

his trainer, David Nicholson, but his form amounts to little so far, and, fine prospect though he is, he has much to prove. Ladbrokes' offer of 6-1 this morning is far too short.

Mr Mulligan is favourite in some lists for the Sun Alliance, and has impressed in two starts over fences. He must be respected, but has a 7/10 penalty to overcome. He is preferred to Major Summit, who is also unbeaten over fences, but

jumped stickily at Sandown last time.

In the top races horses from smaller yards are often over-looked, and that appears to be the case here. John O'Shea's Go Ballistic put up much his best effort when stepped up in trip over course and distance last time, being collared close home by Hill Of Tullow. Likely to be held up even longer today, Go Ballistic can dent some large reputations.

THUNDERER	3.05 Sound Man
00 Landed Gentry	3.35 Lord Gyllene
30 Mole Board	4.05 Dyle
40 Narnum	4.35 Claymore Lad
50 Angelo's Double	

Times Private Handicapper's top rating: 3.35 MR MULLIGAN.

JMG: GOOD TO SOFT (CHASE COURSE); SOFT (HURDLES);

THE ASCOT MEETING.

00 KILFANE CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS' HANDICAP HURDLE
3.55 (2m 4f) (21 runners)
4-00 Landed Gentry 25 (20) 11-12-13-14-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-32-33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42-43-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-55-56-57-58-59-60-61-62-63-64-65-66-67-68-69-70-71-72-73-74-75-76-77-78-79-80-81-82-83-84-85-86-87-88-89-90-91-92-93-94-95-96-97-98-99-100-101-102-103-104-105-106-107-108-109-110-111-112-113-114-115-116-117-118-119-120-121-122-123-124-125-126-127-128-129-130-131-132-133-134-135-136-137-138-139-140-141-142-143-144-145-146-147-148-149-150-151-152-153-154-155-156-157-158-159-160-161-162-163-164-165-166-167-168-169-170-171-172-173-174-175-176-177-178-179-180-181-182-183-184-185-186-187-188-189-190-191-192-193-194-195-196-197-198-199-200-201-202-203-204-205-206-207-208-209-210-211-212-213-214-215-216-217-218-219-220-221-222-223-224-225-226-227-228-229-230-231-232-233-234-235-236-237-238-239-240-241-242-243-244-245-246-247-248-249-250-251-252-253-254-255-256-257-258-259-260-261-262-263-264-265-266-267-268-269-270-271-272-273-274-275-276-277-278-279-280-281-282-283-284-285-286-287-288-289-290-291-292-293-294-295-296-297-298-299-300-301-302-303-304-305-306-307-308-309-310-311-312-313-314-315-316-317-318-319-320-321-322-323-324-325-326-327-328-329-330-331-332-333-334-335-336-337-338-339-340-341-342-343-344-345-346-347-348-349-350-351-352-353-354-355-356-357-358-359-360-361-362-363-364-365-366-367-368-369-370-371-372-373-374-375-376-377-378-379-380-381-382-383-384-385-386-387-388-389-390-391-392-393-394-395-396-397-398-399-400-401-402-403-404-405-406-407-408-409-410-411-412-413-414-415-416-417-418-419-420-421-422-423-424-425-426-427-428-429-430-431-432-433-434-435-436-437-438-439-440-441-442-443-444-445-446-447-448-449-450-451-452-453-454-455-456-457-458-459-460-461-462-463-464-465-466-467-468-469-470-471-472-473-474-475-476-477-478-479-480-481-482-483-484-485-486-487-488-489-490-491-492-493-494-495-496-497-498-499-500-501-502-503-504-505-506-507-508-509-510-511-512-513-514-515-516-517-518-519-520-521-522-523-524-525-526-527-528-529-530-531-532-533-534-535-536-537-538-539-540-541-542-543-544-545-546-547-548-549-550-551-552-553-554-555-556-557-558-559-560-561-562-563-564-565-566-567-568-569-570-571-572-573-574-575-576-577-578-579-580-581-582-583-584-585-586-587-588-589-590-591-592-593-594-595-596-597-598-599-600-601-602-603-604-605-606-607-608-609-610-611-612-613-614-615-616-617-618-619-620-621-622-623-624-625-626-627-628-629-630-631-632-633-634-635-636-637-638-639-640-641-642-643-644-645-646-647-648-649-650-651-652-653-654-655-656-657-658-659-660-661-662-663-664-665-666-667-668-669-670-671-672-673-674-675-676-677-678-679-680-681-682-683-684-685-686-687-688-689-690-691-692-693-694-695-696-697-698-699-700-701-702-703-704-705-706-707-708-709-710-711-712-713-714-715-716-717-718-719-720-721-722-723-724-725-726-727-728-729-730-731-732-733-734-735-736-737-738-739-740-741-742-743-744-745-746-747-748-749-750-751-752-753-754-755-756-757-758-759-760-761-762-763-764-765-766-767-768-769-770-771-772-773-774-775-776-777-778-779-780-781-782-783-784-785-786-787-788-789-790-791-792-793-794-795-796-797-798-799-800-801-802-803-804-805-806-807-808-809-810-811-812-813-814-815-816-817-818-819-820-821-822-823-824-825-826-827-828-829-830-831-832-833-834-835-836-837-838-839-840-841-842-843-844-845-846-847-848-849-850-851-852-853-854-855-856-857-858-859-860-861-862-863-864-865-866-867-868-869-870-871-872-873-874-875-876-877-878-879-880-881-882-883-884-885-886-887-888-889-890-891-892-893-894-895-896-897-898-899-900-901-902-903-904-905-906-907-908-909-910-911-912-913-914-915-916-917-918-919-920-921-922-923-924-925-926-927-928-929-930-931-932-933-934-935-936-937-938-939-940-941-942-943-944-945-946-947-948-949-950-951-952-953-954-955-956-957-958-959-960-961-962-963-964-965-966-967-968-969-970-971-972-973-974-975-976-977-978-979-980-981-982-983-984-985-986-987-988-989-990-991-992-993-994-995-996-997-998-999-1000-1001-1002-1003-1004-1005-1006-1007-1008-1009-1010-1011-1012-1013-1014-1015-1016-1017-1018-1019-1020-1021-1022-1023-1024-1025-1026-1027-1028-1029-1030-1031-1032-1033-1034-1035-1036-1037-1038-1039-1040-1041-1042-1043-1044-1045-1046-1047-1048-1049-1050-1051-1052-1053-1054-1055-1056-1057-1058-1059-1060-1061-1062-1063-1064-1065-1066-1067-1068-1069-1070-1071-1072-1073-1074-1075-1076-1077-1078-1079-1080-1081-1082-1083-1084-1085-1086-1087-1088-1089-1090-1091-1092-1093-1094-1095-1096-1097-1098-1099-1100-1101-1102-1103-1104-1105-1106-1107-1108-1109-1110-1111-1112-1113-1114-1115-1116-1117-1118-1119-1120-1121-1122-1123-1124-1125-1126-1127-1128-1129-1130-1131-1132-1133-1134-1135-1136-1137-1138-1139-1140-1141-1142-1143-1144-1145-1146-1147-1148-1149-1150-1151-1152-1153-1154-1155-1156-1157-1158-1159-1160-1161-1162-1163-1164-1165-1166-1167-1168-1169-1170-1171-1172-1173-1174-1175-1176-1177-1178-1179-1180-1181-1182-1183-1184-1185-1186-1187-1188-1189-1190-1191-1192-1193-1194-1195-1196-1197-1198-1199-1200-1201-1202-1203-1204-1205-1206-1207-1208-1209-1210-1211-1212-1213-1214-1215-1216-1217-1218-1219-1220-1221-1222-1223-1224-1225-122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Reprimand for Rioch on eve of big match

BY PETER BALL

THESE are interesting times for Bruce Rioch. Yesterday, he was warned as to his future conduct by the Football Association; this evening, Aston Villa stand between him and a visit to Wembley in his first season as Arsenal manager.

The connection between the two events is a strong one — the Coca-Cola Cup. Rioch had a heated disagreement on the touchline with Terry McDermott, the Newcastle United assistant manager, in a passionate match that took Arsenal to a semi-final meeting with Villa, with the first leg at Highbury tonight. Rioch was censured and warned that a repeat would bring a stronger response.

Even with a visit to Wembley and entry to Europe as the prize, quite why a second-string competition should evoke such passions is difficult to fathom, particularly for Rioch. As a manager he is known more for his insistence on discipline than for confrontation, but the pressures of life at Highbury have been emerging recently with the signing

of David Platt under scrutiny and a run of only four wins in their past 14 games. A return to the Coca-Cola Cup final, in which his Bolton Wanderers side played last year with a style they have lacked since promotion, would ease some of those pressures.

Rioch said yesterday: "We have to make sure we can take a good advantage with us when we travel to Villa park in two weeks' time."

Arsenal will again be without Adams, Platt and Parlor and Rioch is hoping that Bergkamp, the Holland international forward, will provide the inspiration. "Every successful team needs players of instinctive ability that can turn a game," Rioch said. "The only thing Dutch about their win against Newcastle was the use of the dog, but that may be less effective against Villa."

"They are a very strong side defensively," Bergkamp said. So strong that Brian Little, the Villa manager, was still undecided yesterday whether to bring back Paul McGrath tonight. McGrath missed the win at Bolton on Saturday, Steve Staunton performing impressively on the left side of three centre backs in his stead.

"Paul McGrath is a great player and will continue to be so for Aston Villa," Little said. "He will be in the 14 at Highbury, but I haven't decided yet whether he will play. I have to make sure I pick the right side because it's a massive game for the club."

If the Coca-Cola Cup for once overshadows the FA Cup, the confused state of the senior competition will at last become clearer after an appealing group of outstanding fourth-round matches tonight: both the Cup holders, Everton, and West Ham United are at risk against teams from the Endleigh Insurance League in their replays.

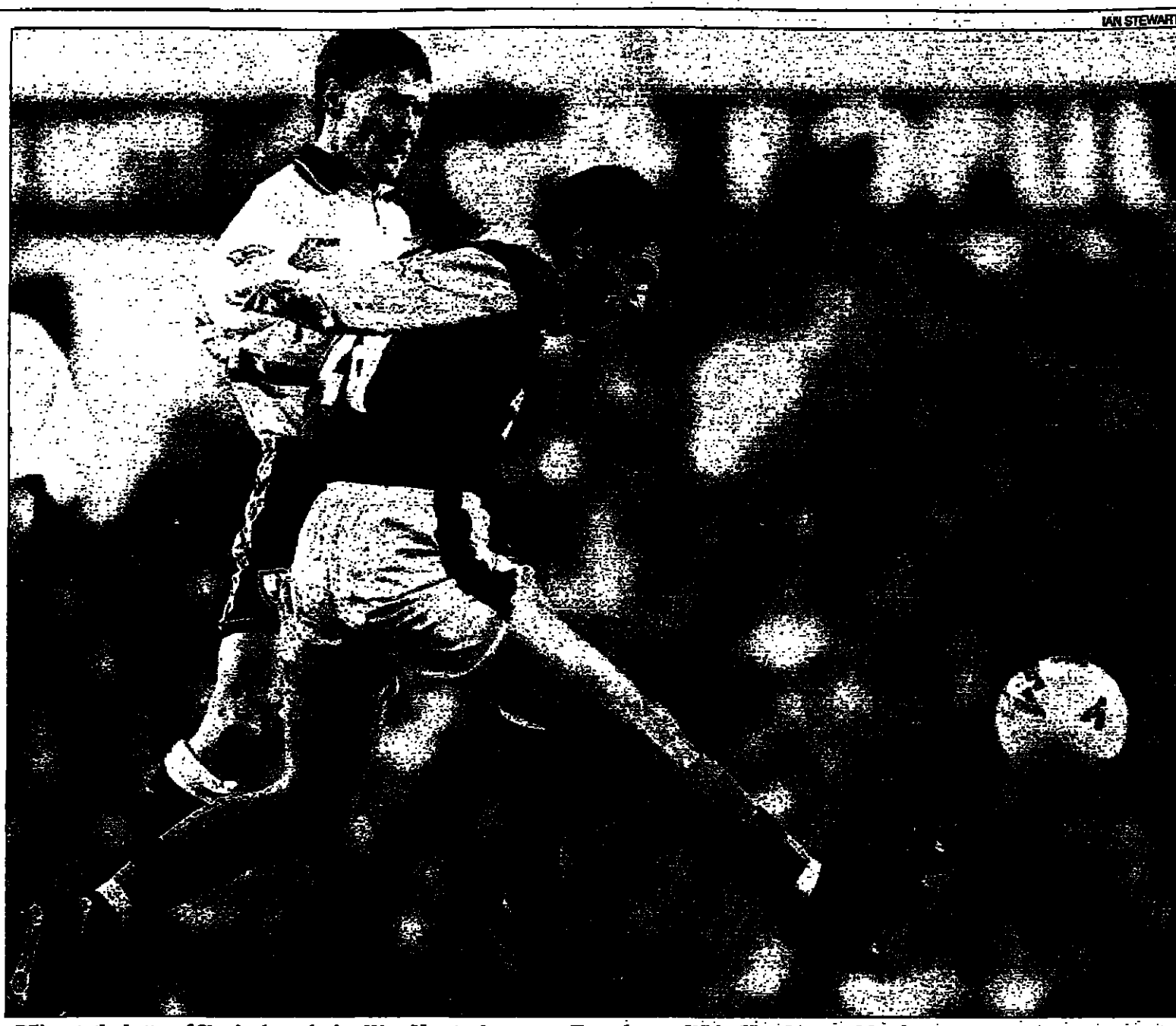
Everton travel to Port Vale with serious doubts about the fitness of Duncan Ferguson, who strained his groin in the win on Saturday over Manchester City. Ferguson posed the main problem to Port Vale in the original game at Goodison Park and his absence could help to tilt the game in Port Vale's favour.

If Ferguson does miss the match, Daniel Amokachi will deputise. There are doubts, too, about Joe Parkinson, but Ebrell is available after a two-match suspension and Andrei Kanchelskis returns after playing for Russia in Malta.

West Ham won much admiration as well as three points at Tottenham Hotspur on Monday; playing at Grimsby Town 48 hours later will be a different proposition, particularly with Dani and Bilic ineligible — always assuming that the internal strife on Saturday has not undermined Grimsby's challenge.

Leeds United, who are already ahead at the halfway stage in their Coca-Cola Cup semi-final, tonight turn their attention to the FA Cup, when their twice-postponed tie with Bolton takes place. With Ford passing a fitness test but Pemberton and Jobson still missing, Leeds are likely to be unchanged from the side that counter-attacked so well at St Andrew's on Sunday. Bolton know that this game is their last chance to rescue something from a depressing season.

That is also true for Coventry City and Manchester City — at least until Sunday, when the winners of the replay at Maine Road visit Old Trafford. "I'd sooner be where we are in the League and still in the Cup than be halfway up the Premiership and out of the Cup," Alan Ball, the Manchester City manager, said yesterday. Birmingham City appear closer to being made to play a game behind closed doors with the Football Association indicating its attitude was hardening to the throwing of coins and a snooker ball on to the pitch during the Coca-Cola Cup semi-final, first leg defeat by Leeds United on Sunday. The Leeds captain, Gary McAllister, was struck by a missile.



Bilic gets the better of Sheringham during West Ham's victory over Tottenham at White Hart Lane on Monday

West Ham indebted to foreign legion

Russell Kempson on the new faces helping Harry Redknapp's team towards Premiership safety

WEST Ham United's third successive FA Cup Premier League victory — 1-0 against Tottenham Hotspur at White Hart Lane on Monday — should have banished any lingering fears of relegation at Upton Park. Now in their thirteenth place, eight points clear of the drop zone, it would take a serious reversal of fortune for them to be dragged back into the mire.

However, for Harry Redknapp, the West Ham manager, it was still a night of mixed emotions. Dani, the Portuguese forward, and Slaven Bilic, the Croatian central defender, made their full debuts in claret and blue and responded with polished performances in an alien environment, while the Dumitrescu, the Romanian, remains entangled in the tentacles of the Department of Employment.

Dani, 19, scored the winning goal after only four minutes, nodding in from close range after Ian Walker, the Tottenham goalkeeper, had parried a shot from Dicks almost straight on to the striker's head. "The pitch was not good, it was very tiring," Dani, who

was replaced by Tony Cottee in the 67th minute, said. "I am not used to that sort of surface but the team worked hard and I enjoyed it."

Bilic, playing his first game for two months, slotted in alongside Marc Rieper at the heart of the West Ham defence. "We passed the ball beautifully but maybe we should score more goals," Bilic, a £1.65 million signing from Karlsruhe, in Germany, said. "It was very quick, very competitive, something which surprised me, but I think I coped okay."

Yet it was the absence of Dumitrescu, another of West Ham's recent influx of foreign players, that cast a shadow over Redknapp's contentment. As if mocking the Department's decision to refuse him a work permit, after his £1.5 million move from White Hart Lane, the match programme still had him listed

at No 8 in the Tottenham squad. "We can bring in any mug who doesn't need a permit, but he is a class player with 52 international caps," Redknapp said. "Because he didn't fit into Tottenham's side, it doesn't mean he can't fit into mine." West Ham have launched a vigorous appeal against the decision, the result of which is likely to be announced early next week.

Though Tottenham also played a vibrant role in a match of numerous goal attempts and retained fifth place in the Premiership, their third defeat in six league outings again questioned their ability to qualify for next season's UEFA Cup.

"We were disappointed in the first half but I thought we came back well after the break," Gerry Francis, the manager, said. Equally worrying was the failure of Teddy Sheringham and

Chris Armstrong to add to their joint tally of 34 goals. It was their third consecutive blank in the Premiership.

At the County Ground, Martin Ling helped to ease the jumbled FA Cup fixture list when his last-minute goal gave Swindon Town a 1-0 victory over Oldham Athletic in their much-delayed fourth-round tie. Ling had been on the pitch only 12 minutes as a replacement for Steve McMahon, the Swindon player-manager, who had dropped him before the game.

Had Oldham shown a more adventurous approach, Graeme Sharp, the manager, might have been contemplating a fifth-round place instead of McMahon, his former Everton colleague. "It's no consolation to lose to an old mate," Sharp said. "Steve did a good job, sitting in midfield and using all his experience. I didn't think Swindon hurt us that much, but perhaps we didn't do enough going forward." Swindon, the Endleigh Insurance League second division leaders, also missed a penalty in the fifth minute.

Jones is fined again after attack on Gullit

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

VINNIE JONES received a heavy fine from the Football Association (FA) for the fifth time in three years yesterday. The Wimbledon midfielder player's criticism, in a newspaper column, of Ruud Gullit in particular and foreign footballers in general cost him £2,000 and took his recent contributions to Lancaster Gate's coffers to £26,250.

The FA said it had considered banning Jones, but a spokesman, Steve Double, added: "He was hit in the

pocket rather than with a suspension because we accepted that Wimbledon did not have any control over the article, or him."

Jones claimed that Chelsea's former Holland international had tricked the referee into sending him off for the twelfth time in his career during Wimbledon's Boxing Day win at Stamford Bridge. Jones wrote to the FA offering his "apologies and regrets" and turning down the offer of a personal hearing into the dispute charge. He knows his punishment

could have been a lot worse: in November 1993, he was given a record £20,000 fine and a suspended six-month ban by the FA for his commentary in a video glorifying football violence and dirty tricks. He was fined £1,500 three years ago for making obscene gestures to Arsenal supporters while with Chelsea and given a £1,000 fine and four-month ban (his fourth of the season) for reaching 41 disciplinary points.

He then paid out £1,750 last year on a misconduct charge for swearing at Kevin Keegan,

the Newcastle manager, after a match, but escaped sanctions when he was reported to the FA for biting the nose of a journalist in a bar in Dublin.

Giovanni Trapattoni, one of the most successful coaches in Italian football history, resigned from Cagliari, the struggling Serie A club, yesterday after their weekend thrashing by Juventus, his old employers.

Trapattoni, winner of an unrivalled six league titles with Juventus and one with Internazionale, had quit a club

without completing a full season in charge.

"When I arrived at the club this morning I did not expect to have to hand in my resignation," Trapattoni said. Trapattoni, who joined Cagliari last summer after a disappointing season with Bayern Munich, said he had decided to quit after meeting club officials and realising he no longer had their full backing.

"I now realise I acted hastily in accepting this job," he said, "above all when I promised ambitious targets."

Sorensen happy to sign new contract

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

KURT SORESENSEN has been confirmed as the Workington coach for the inaugural season of rugby league's Super League. Workington, who have debts approaching £1 million, were last week taken over by Bob Jamieson, a Scotland-based sports marketing consultant.

The takeover delayed negotiations with Sorensen, who has now signed a new, one-year deal. "I'm pleased that my future has been decided," Sorensen, a former New Zealand international, said. "Now, we have just seven weeks to prepare for the start of Super League and I shall be reviewing the playing staff with Mr Jamieson to see what we have and whether we can make any more signings."

Sorensen, who enjoyed a successful playing career with Widnes, had a spell as player-coach with Whitehaven before taking over at Derwent Park from Peter Walsh at the start of the shortened centenary season. However, Workington had a disappointing time in their second season back in the top division, finishing bottom, with just four wins from 20 matches, as well as being beaten by Widnes, from the first division, in the Regal Trophy and Silk Cut Challenge Cup.

"It's my impression that any coach in the game would have struggled at Workington last season," Jamieson said. "The Widnes full back who has not played for more than two months, is ready to return in the rescheduled Challenge Cup fifth-round tie at Dewsbury on Sunday."

The BBC will televise the sixth-round tie between Salford, who beat Wigan last Sunday, and St Helens, the favourites, on February 24.

Misconduct earns fine for Hunter

By PHIL YATES

PAUL HUNTER, the first season snooker professional who reached the semi-finals of the Regal Welsh Open two weeks ago, has been fined £2,500, of which £2,000 has been suspended, by the governing body, the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association (WPBSA).

Hunter, 17, of Leeds, was also ordered to pay £25 towards the cost of the hearing, which looked into a number of incidents at a qualifying school in Blackpool last summer. Snooker's youngest professional was found to be in breach of a ruling that requires WPBSA members to "conduct themselves in a proper manner".

Hunter, the English junior champion, was also found guilty of bringing the game into disrepute, but 80 per cent of his fine has been suspended. Unexpectedly, Mike Russell, No 1 in the world billiard rankings, escaped punishment after an alleged biffin incident during the world billiards championships in Bombay last year.

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<p>ATHLETICS</p> <p>TAMPERE, Finland: International indoor meeting. Men: 100m: 11.1 (Finland) 6.76; 200m: 14.2 (Finland) 6.77; 400m: 3.2 (Finland) 6.78; 800m: 1.5 (Finland) 6.79; 1600m: 3.5 (Finland) 6.80; 3200m: 7.1 (Finland) 6.81; 6400m: 14.2 (Finland) 6.82; 12800m: 28.4 (Finland) 6.83; 25600m: 56.8 (Finland) 6.84; 51200m: 113.6 (Finland) 6.85; 102400m: 227.2 (Finland) 6.86; 204800m: 454.4 (Finland) 6.87; 409600m: 908.8 (Finland) 6.88; 819200m: 1817.6 (Finland) 6.89; 1638400m: 3635.2 (Finland) 6.90; 3276800m: 7270.4 (Finland) 6.91; 6553600m: 14540.8 (Finland) 6.92; 13107200m: 29081.6 (Finland) 6.93; 26214400m: 58163.2 (Finland) 6.94; 52428800m: 116326.4 (Finland) 6.95; 104857600m: 232652.8 (Finland) 6.96; 209715200m: 465305.6 (Finland) 6.97; 419430400m: 930611.2 (Finland) 6.98; 838860800m: 1861222.4 (Finland) 6.99; 1677721600m: 3722444.8 (Finland) 7.00; 3355443200m: 7444889.6 (Finland) 7.01; 6710886400m: 14889779.2 (Finland) 7.02; 13421772800m: 29779558.4 (Finland) 7.03; 26843545600m: 59559116.8 (Finland) 7.04; 53687091200m: 119118233.6 (Finland) 7.05; 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SPORT

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 14 1996

TENNIS 96

CAPRIATI FORCE
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RETURN TO ACTIC

Team doctor's orders could give edge during nail-biting finishes in World Cup

England put accent on preparation

FROM ALAN LEE
CRICKET CORRESPONDENT
IN AHMEDABAD

TO WIN this World Cup will require far more from a team than simple cricketing excellence, as the England players, who launched the tournament early this morning, are rapidly finding out. You have to travel, you have to stay healthy, you have to stay sane and, on the sub-continent, none of them comes easy. Neither, for some, does the management commandment forbidding nail-biting.

For all the fascinations of India, there are, for Western sportsmen, as many frustrations and privations. New Zealand, England's opponents today, have the advantage of



Franklin obituary 19
Rioch warned 44

familiarity after touring India as recently as November. "It feels as if we've only been away for a long training session," Lee Gernon, their captain, said yesterday. The England players, several of them virgin soldiers in this part of the world, are having to accustom themselves to an alien way of life.

Their preparation for survival and success has been meticulous: Phil Bell, the team doctor, has seen to that. One of his earliest missions was to identify the nail-biters of the party, the most persistent of whom were Graham Thorpe and Richard Illingworth, and wean them off the habit. They have already grown better fingernails and, more pertinently, avoided illness.

"Prevention is my aim," Bell said. "When the grounds here are watered, it is done with mucky water that may have come straight from sewage drains. Picking up the ball after it has rolled on the grass, then biting your nails afterwards, is a recipe for stomach trouble."



Fletcher, the New Zealand batsman, practises yesterday in front of an unusually large audience before the opening match of the cricket World Cup against England

For similar reasons, Bell insists that the players wash their hands thoroughly whenever they come off the field. He has also issued a list of dietary instructions entirely at odds with the advice he would give in other countries. Fish and salads, the health foods of Europe, must be avoided at all costs, as must ice in drinks. For the first time, an England team on tour is on constant medication. Each day,

every player must swallow a capsule of an antibiotic that protects them against diarrhoea and other stomach disorders. "Prevention makes far more sense than cure when a bug can knock three or four players out of your team on the morning of a match," Bell said.

Some players take their own prudent precautions, none take more than Jack Russell, though in his case the measures are not all specific to India and Pakistan. Russell took his own baked beans and Jaffa cakes to South Africa, too.

"I could live on beans and rice," he said. "Last time I was here, I had steak and chips 35

nights in succession, but I hardly eat any meat now. I certainly won't eat curry. For breakfast and lunch, all I have is bottled water with a carbohydrate powder."

Russell is not complaining. He knows, and others are finding out, that to do so here is self-defeating. Michael Atherton did spend the practice session yesterday bellowing abuse, but that was entirely directed at himself for dropped catches and false strokes. He has a proper, captain's attitude to the tour and is determined that his team should not fall into the mentality of siege and persecution fatally adopted by many previous England sides.

Even the absurdity of the journey, from Calcutta on Monday, which began for England and three other teams at 4.30am and ended at 9pm, brought a philosophical response. While the vagaries of the Indian Airlines timetable indicate that the Cup organisers should have chartered an aircraft, Atherton is wise enough to acknowledge the local acceptance of travel as an essential trial. "The travel days are an irritant, but the teams who face up to them best are halfway to doing well in the tournament," he said.

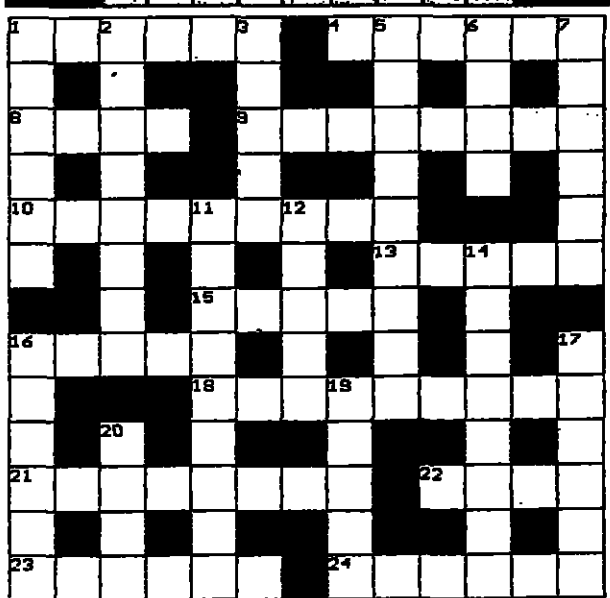
The manager, Raymond Illingworth, was not so sanguine. "If a football manager was asked to do the three days

we've just had immediately before the first game in a World Cup, he would laugh the organisers out of court," he said. "It may be the same for both sides, but that doesn't make it right." Illingworth, of course, is the man who vowed, in his 1969 autobiography, "India is one country I will never tour." Much has changed since then, but for one perhaps not enough.

When Illingworth said that England had a good draw in the competition, he was not thinking of his social life. All but one of their group games are in alcohol-free Pakistan and the other, the match today, is in the one remaining "dry" state in In-

dia. So, if Robin Smith sought a celebratory drink after a fitness test yesterday that confirmed he could stay with the party, he was out of luck.

One man who may have been driven to strong drink, however, was Jagmohan Dalmiya, the harassed convenor of Pilcom, the organising committee. India is affronted by the failings of the opening ceremony on Sunday and Dalmiya is being held responsible. In Calcutta's State Assembly yesterday, a demand was heard for Dalmiya's arrest, charged with wasting money. First the Colombo forfeits, now the fury of Calcutta: it may be enough to make Dalmiya bite his nails.

TIMES TWO
CROSSWORD

No 704

ACROSS

- 1 Secret; a thicket (6)
4 Place surrounded by water (6)
8 Fair; only (4)
9 Larger part (of divided group) (8)
10 (Sea-)monster: The — (Hobbes) (9)
13 Animal story with moral (5)
15 (Treasure) dug up (5)
16 Tricky question (5)
18 Official wrong-righter (9)
21 Scattered, occasional (8)
22 A concert; a walk (4)
23 Large (meal); enthusiastic (6)
24 Leg-coverings (6)

DOWN

- 1 Wheedle (6)
2 Destroyer of Pompeii (8)
3 Induce (5)
5 Help in tiny, simple steps (9)
6 Very desirous (4)
7 Solid CO₂ (3,3)
10 Spaceman (9)
11 Most powerful nuclear weapon (1-4)
14 Dishonour, stain (8)
16 Violent coup attempt (6)
17 Strong hostile feeling (6)
19 (Eg film) shown full-length (5)
20 US Midwest state (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 703

ACROSS: 1 Soft touch 6 Gib 8 Chimera 9 Golan 16 Loan 11 Nigatory 13 Radius 14 Vassal 17 Bequeath 18 Barn 20 Realm 21 Lookout 22 Tie 23 Non-metric

DOWN: 1 Secular 2 Fair and square 3 Twee 4 Uranos 5 Hogmanay 6 Gallows humour 7 Bandy 12 Superman 15 Lunatic 16 Stalin 17 Bole

SOLUTION TO TIMES TWO CROSSWORD NO 699

In association with BRITISH MIDLAND

ACROSS: 5 Bright lights 8 Stress 9 Yeoman 10 Cure 12 Eclipse 14 Retina 15 Byte 17 Fallen 18 Cavity 20 Death warrant DOWN: 1 Obsolete race 2 Mile 3 Playset 4 Ignominy 6 Hiss 7 Transverse 11 Resolve 13 Unknown 16 Scar 19 Vial

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Wales stick by Twickenham XV

BY DAVID HANDS

FOR the first time in three years, Wales's rugby union selectors felt able to leave well alone when they named, yesterday, an unchanged team to play Scotland at Cardiff on Saturday in the third round of the five nations' championship. Whether their confidence will be justified against the only unbeaten team in the championship is a moot point.

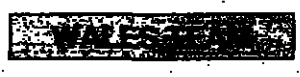
Wales, as losers at Twickenham earlier this month, felt able to take more from the game than did England. Given a supportive crowd at the National Stadium, their belief is that they can upset a team that, all of a sudden, have become strong favourites.

"We played well in parts of the game against England," Kevin Bowring, the coach, said. "We need to extend the length of those parts against Scotland, to build on the progress we have been making." To that end, Wales can do without the storm in a teacup surrounding Derwyn

Jones, the 6ft 10in Cardiff lock, whose appearance in a television commercial has caused accusations of "cheating" the national jersey.

More appropriately, Jones and his forward colleagues have taken part in additional scrummaging sessions since the match at Twickenham, when Bowring was conscious that the scrum was not all it should be. Indeed, they have worked so hard against the under-21 squad — who play their Scottish opposite numbers on Friday in Swansea — that Andrew Lewis, the loose-head prop, sustained a cur

"The players are keen for success, they are keen to play a running style, but that will take time," Bowring said. "Even so, if we carry that attitude on to the international stage and both teams buy into it, Saturday could be an entertaining game. We are looking for an expansive, exciting game, but we are also looking to develop a winning pattern."



W J L Thomas (Llanelli), I C Evans (Llanelli), L B Davies (Neath), R G Davies (Llanelli), W T Proctor (Llanelli), A C Thomas (Gwent), R Jones (Bridgend), P Lewis (Cardiff), J M Humphreys (Cardiff), D D Davies (Gwent), E W Lewis (Cardiff), R G Jones (Llanelli), D Jones (Cardiff), R G Jones (Llanelli), H T Taylor (Cardiff), R G Jones (Llanelli), A P Moore (Cardiff), G R Jenkins (Gwent).

Seven of the Wales team will be playing their first championship match at Cardiff, among them Arwel Thomas, the Bristol stand-off half, who continues to keep out the experienced Neil Jenkins. Bowring believes Jenkins, of Pontypridd, who has played only one game in the past nine weeks because of injury, to be ring-rusty.

It remains to be seen whether the optimism created by losing only 21-15 to England is justified. It may be argued that, had England been less sterile in their approach, they would have won by far more. On the other hand, Wales

showed a pleasing sense of initiative and it is reasonable to give talented young individuals such as Justin Thomas, of Llanelli — who did not have the best of days at Twickenham — another chance to display the skills that have lit up Stradey Park this season.

Wales has other reasons to be pleased yesterday. Scottish Life, the insurance company, has agreed a deal worth £400,000 over the next four years to sponsor their home internationals with Scotland and England, while Sky Sports, the satellite television company, is reported to be offering a lucrative deal to cover the country's first-division clubs.

Moreover, though the national selectors appear to have turned their backs on Robert Jones, Wales's most-capped scrum half, Jones is not about to depart the country. Swansea and three local companies have put together a package that has persuaded Jones to turn down the advances of Harlequins.

Grimsby refuse Laws' offer to quit

BY DAVID MADDOCK

GRIMSBY Town's preparation for their FA Cup fourth-round replay with West Ham United tonight continued on its eccentric course yesterday, with Brian Laws, the club's manager, offering to resign after his confrontation with his Italian player, Ivano Bonetti. William Carr, the Grimsby chairman, refused the offer.

Bonetti underwent a two-hour operation at St Hugh's Hospital in Grimsby, to repair a fractured jaw and cheekbone and Laws felt such extreme action on the eve of the club's most important fixture in a decade was warranted. "If the chairman thought that the best thing to do was for me to resign, then I would without hesitation," he said. "I am employed by

this club on my footballing ability and if it is felt I have failed in that duty, then I must step down."

Carr declined and asked instead for support as Grimsby prepare to entertain West Ham. "A lot of things are said in the heat of the moment and they are not taken seriously," he said of the offer to quit. "It is just another episode in the long line of incidents a club chairman has to deal with. I want to put this behind us and concentrate on the very important match ahead."

Bonetti will have trouble concentrating on little else than the pain from a fracture allegedly inflicted by his manager. It came in a dressing-room confrontation after Grimsby's 3-2 defeat at Luton Town last Saturday. The former Juventus player is now contemplating his future

with the club whose supporters raised — through an appeal — the £50,000 needed to keep him at Blundell Park until the end of the season.

Gianni Paladini, the player's adviser, said last night that there were a lot of hard decisions to be made. "I have spoken to him after the operation on his broken jaw, which was very serious," he said. "Nothing like this has ever happened to him in his many years in football and he is understandably dismayed. At the moment, it doesn't look very good and he will not be able to play for some time."

"I am not sure if he can stay with the club — a lot depends on the reaction of Brian Laws: but he will be released from hospital in the morning and will have talks with the relevant people."

England shuffle pack for Scotland match

BY DAVID HANDS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

MARTIN BAYFIELD, generally regarded as one of the world's leading lineout forwards over the past two years, was dropped last night by England from the rugby union team that will play Scotland in Murrayfield on March 2. His place will go to the unscathed Bristolian, Gareth Archer.

Bayfield's demotion, after 31 caps, is part of the selectors' response to the generally disappointing displays by the forwards during this season's championship. With him goes his Northampton colleague, Tim Rodber — for the second time this season — in a back-row reshuffle that sees Leicester's Dean Richards restored once more.

The England player most at risk after the defeat by France and the six-point victory over Wales had seemed to be Mark Regan but the Bristol hooker holds his place and now has Archer, his club colleague, to throw in to. The selectors have identified the lineout problems, which have assailed England to lie more with the 6ft 10in Bayfield while the restoration of Richards must surely bring greater tactical nous to the pack.

Archer, 21, has been a regular in the A side over the last year. He first made his name with Newcastle Gosforth but moved south last summer and joined the Army as well as Bristol. At 6ft 6in and 18st 8in he will prove a formidable scrummaging partner for Martin Johnson but it is his lineout technique which will come under closest scrutiny against the Scots.

This will be the first match of the season which Richards, England's most-capped No 8, starts. He came on as a replacement against France but the pack has missed his authority and it is significant that Ben Clark, pack leader this season, moves to the blind-side flank to accommodate him.

ENGLAND: M J Carr (Bath), M Sleghtshorne (Bath), W D C Carling (Harlequins), J C Quincey (Bath), R Underwood (Leicester), P J Grayson (Northampton), M J S Davies (Cardiff), G C Rowntree (Leicester), M P Regan (Bristol), J Leonard (Leicester), S B Carter (Bath), M O Johnson (Leicester), G Archer (Bristol), L B N Dallaglio (Wessex), D Richards (Leicester).
Replacements: J E S Callard (Bath), P R de Glanville (Bath), K P P Bracken (Leicester), J E Ruggie (Bath), R G R Dave (Bath), T A K Rodber (Northampton).

SUM THINGS UP...

£117 MILLION INVESTMENT...
...in the past three years - by 40 new and relocating companies and over 50 companies expanding their operations. Companies...

...FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD...
...The USA, Israel, Kuwait, Switzerland, Sweden, Singapore, Australia, Japan, Yemen, France, Germany, the Netherlands - and the UK. Creating...

...2,000 NEW JOBS...
...in industries ranging from reinforced textile making, food manufacture and processing to hi-tech electronics and retail banking. Occupying...

...OVER 1 MILLION SQUARE FEET...
...of previously empty commercial space. Office developments, modern factory units, expensive distribution warehouses. Helped by...

...OVER £10M GRANT AID...
...comprising £10 million government support for larger job creating capital investment and over £100,000 towards investment and innovation by SMEs.

...IN
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WEST LANCASHIRE

Fred McLaughlin, The West Lancs Project, 1 Westgate, Pennington, Skelmersdale, West Lancashire WN8 8LP.
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